

THE 1864 FLORIDA FEDERAL EXPEDITION:
BLUNDERING INTO MODERN WARFARE

By

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PREFACE

There are numerous references within this work to persons of African descent. Within the context of events during the nineteenth century, the word "colored" appears in several references to certain military units or personages as was common usage during that period. Where the context is more modern times, the word "black" is used. For clarity and ease of reading, arabic numerals are used for all military units except within quotes where the numbers were spelled out.

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The Civil War was the breakpoint in modern warfare. The advent of nationalism and the arrival of the Industrial Revolution changed warfare from being the exclusive province of a relative handful of professionals to one involving the total resources, human and material, of those engaged in the war. At the start of the war in the United States, few in leadership positions comprehended the nature of total war; fewer still understood the implications of a war fought for hearts and minds as well as for the military defeat of the enemy.

Union General George B. McClellan realized that the new strategic targets were lines of communications. He envisioned utilizing the Federal naval advantage to project land units ashore by surprise to seize important "choke" points within the Confederacy. These points would then be fortified and the fragmented Confederate forces forced to attack these points at a disadvantage. Such tactics would

soon bring defeat to the Confederacy with minimum disruption of the civilian environment. General McClellan's fall from grace postponed the use of this strategy.

In 1864, Florida was militarily weak, abandoned by the Confederacy because of her geography and lack of strategic importance. The Federal Florida expedition in 1864 envisioned the use of the navy to land troops by surprise in Florida. The objectives were to cut off Confederate commissary supplies from Florida, recruit blacks for the new colored regiments, disrupt Florida rail transportation and prevent unused rail from being used in strategically more important areas of the Confederacy, open a Florida port to trade, and, if possible, restore Florida to the Union. The military, economic, political, and psychological objectives, warfare in the modern sense, had a strong probability of achievement at the start. The full potential of the expedition was not realized because of the limited abilities of its leadership and the Union defeat at the battle of Olustee, proportionately the third bloodiest battle of the war for the Union.

In spite of Olustee, the Federal expedition was not a total failure. It achieved a number of successes that have been overlooked because of Olustee. These can be appreciated by an examination of the expedition within the larger contexts of the war and modern warfare.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

The Civil War marks the breakpoint between early modern and modern warfare.¹ A number of developments had taken place within a relatively short space of time that affected the manner in which warfare was conducted. The beginning of the nineteenth century had seen the introduction of the citizen army and nationalistic spirit into what had once been the private province of a comparatively small handful of professionals. The major innovator was Napoleon, and the legacy of his generalship leading to the characteristic climatic, decisive battle provided the ideal model for students of warfare. The primary interpreter of Napoleon to English-speaking military students before the American Civil War, to include those at West Point, was the Frenchman, Antoine Henri, Baron de Jomini.² Unfortunately for many of those students who were to become the leaders and participants in the first of the truly modern wars, the major work of the Prussian interpreter of Napoleon, Carl von Clausewitz, was not translated into English until 1873.³ It was more relevant to modern war than the Jominian interpretation.

The Jominian emphasis was on the offensive; the basic tenet of strategy under this concept was to bring the maximum

possible force to bear against the decisive point in the theater of operations while the enemy could muster only an inferior part of his own strength at the same point.⁴ Clausewitz, on the other hand, saw war in a wider context, one more in keeping with what we today characterize as modern war. Probably the most remembered of any of the Clausewitzian dictums is that "War is merely the continuation of policy by other means."⁵ The pronouncement is simple but has been misinterpreted. In his own words, what he meant was, "the political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purposes."⁶ Perhaps unconsciously, President Abraham Lincoln sensed this. President Lincoln also sensed another of Clausewitz's observations that, "even the ultimate outcome of a war is not to be regarded always as the final one."⁷ President Lincoln was one of the few to realize that military defeat of the Confederacy would not be enough!

In the American Civil War the task of the federal government was to restore the Union which meant, in Clausewitzian terms, imposing its will upon a powerless Confederacy to the point where those states that had seceded would return to the Union and voluntarily stay there. The implications of this task were that the primary goals would be political rather than military ones; policy would therefore permeate all military operations and have a continuous influence on them.

Clausewitz had also pointed out that rather than sole reliance on a Napoleonic style climatic battle, there were "many roads to success, and . . . they do not all involve the opponent's outright defeat." ⁸ He gave as examples activities that covered the spectrum from "the destruction of the enemy's forces, the conquest of his territory, to a temporary occupation or invasion, to projects with an immediate political purpose, and finally to passively awaiting the enemy's attacks."⁹ Clausewitz was referring to operations that had direct political repercussions and were designed to disrupt or paralyze an opposing alliance. The Federal drive to gain control of the Mississippi with the objectives of splitting and separating the Confederacy as originally envisioned in General Winfield Scott's "Anaconda Policy" would be an example of this type of an operation.

Clausewitz believed that in the absolute form of war, everything was related. In a total war, everybody was a cog in a national war effort. The moral, economic, psychological, social, and political realms, as well as the military, had importance. Until the one result that counted, final victory, nothing was won and nothing was lost.¹⁰ Few military leaders in the American Civil War had the ability to take this larger view of the war, to consider grand strategy and campaigns rather than individual battles. Many won or lost battles and were confused as to what to do next. General Ulysses S. Grant was an exception. He had the

ability to rise above the fortunes of a single battle and "master the flow of a long series of events, almost to the point of making any outcome of a single battle, victory, draw, or even defeat, serve his eventual purpose equally well."¹¹ A characteristic of modern war was the interdependence of all elements of war; the value of any of the parts could be measured only in its relationship to the whole. Men who could understand this were at a premium.

The early nineteenth century wars in the Western world were generally restricted to the military environment. Economic warfare, conducting war against the enemy's resources, was almost unknown; if practiced, it was done within very narrow limits such as through a naval blockade. Economic warfare in early modern Europe would have had a serious effect on the existing precarious financial and economic stability. Further, in wars of this type, economic strength was not decisive. The products and resources required to sustain the military forces during this period were still limited enough and simple enough that they could be provided by a relatively limited economy.¹² This condition was starting to change by the time of the American Civil War. Armies had become so huge and their logistic requirements so large that economic warfare became a tempting possibility; this was particularly so after a number of experiences demonstrated failures to achieve decisive results by other means. The extreme form of economic warfare was

the destruction of the Confederate resources carried out by General William T. Sherman in his march through Georgia and South Carolina. While General Grant conducted a war of annihilation against the Confederate forces, General Sherman conducted one against the Confederate resources and the minds of the Confederacy's peoples. This was the new total war; it was a contest between peoples beyond the scope of the contest between armies.¹³

Clausewitz, in a discussion on theory, talked about learning from the lessons of history.¹⁴ He cautioned, however, that before drawing conclusions, those lessons learned had to be qualified within the current contemporary situation to be valid. This warning was ignored by many in the American Civil War.

The Industrial Revolution had a major impact on the conduct of war. The introduction of the conoidal bullet for the rifled gun revolutionized infantry tactics. Whereas in the seventeenth century the attacker was successful more than three-fourths of the time, in the latter part of the nineteenth century the attacker was successful less than half of the time.¹⁵ This was demonstrated at such places as Antietam, Gettysburg, and Cold Harbor. The tactical advantage in warfare had shifted to the defender and in too many battles in the Civil War, the attacks were best described as suicidal. Before 1850, artillery caused from 40 to 50 percent of battlefield casualties, infantry small arms

30 to 40 percent, and the saber and the bayonet 15 to 20 percent. After 1860, artillery caused only 8 to 10 percent of battlefield casualties, infantry small arms 85 to 90 percent, and the saber and bayonet 4 to 6 percent.¹⁶

Although writing in 1832, well before the American Civil War, Clausewitz had anticipated this shift in emphasis from the offense to the defense, maintaining that "defense is a stronger form of fighting than attack."¹⁷ Union General George B. McClellan, on his own, came to the same conclusion and advocated an offensive strategy combined with defensive tactics. He believed that the most effective technique of modern warfare was to place oneself on something critical to one's opponent, such as his lines of communication, and force him to attack you. While General McClellan was never able to demonstrate fully this idea, others had great success with it. In the Franco-Prussian War, Prussian General von Moltke won both the battle of Metz and the decisive battle of Sedan by doing exactly that.¹⁸

The introduction of the rifled gun and the steam engine gave ships an advantage over coastal defenses. The telegraph and the railroad completely changed the Jominian concepts of interior lines, exterior lines, lines of communication, concentration, and mass at the same time they redefined the concept of strategic targets. The nature of warfare was changing drastically, and those who were tied to the past found themselves severely handicapped by that tie. In a war

as total as the American Civil War was to be, the effective leaders were those who could divorce themselves from the past and envision the new parameters of warfare. These innovators were men like Nathan Bedford Forest, George B. McClellan, William T. Sherman, P.G.T. Beauregard, and Ulysses S. Grant. The men who planned and executed the 1864 Federal expedition into Florida had an opportunity to become innovators in establishing the foundations for a new form of warfare.

Florida was the third State to secede from the Union, taking that action on January 10, 1861. She did so because psychologically, economically, socially and politically, Florida was closely attuned with the other Southern states and the state's leadership believed it was in her best interest to do so. A large segment of the population was against secession but their voices and their votes were overshadowed by the majority. Florida's seeming initial enthusiasm for the southern cause was demonstrated by her rush to secede and her efforts to support loyally that cause with men and material. The amount of moral support, enthusiasm, and loyalty that Florida contributed, however, was not needed as much as more tangible assets such as manpower, arms, and manufactured goods; unfortunately, these were in short supply in Florida.

Having only recently become a state in 1845, Florida was sparsely settled and largely an agricultural economy. Geographically, she had an extended coastline with a few

good harbors and some waterways that provided access to the interior. The southern part of the state was largely uninhabited wilderness; the settled northern part spread so far from east to west that in political reality, there existed three states rather than one. The interests of East Florida were focused on the Atlantic coast, Middle Florida on the interior of western Georgia and Alabama, and West Florida on the Gulf and Mississippi Valley. Limited transportation facilities and extended distances created a provincialism that saw the people of the various sections closer to peoples in contiguous states than with other parts of their own state. The economic reliance on agriculture and extractive industries such as lumber and turpentine created a situation in which antebellum Florida had become heavily dependent upon imports for finished products and manufactured goods. Her own limited manufactures contained little of value to contribute to a joint military alliance.

Politically, at the time of secession, the state was controlled by the radical Democrats whose base of power was in the seven planting counties in Middle Florida. There was opposition but the failure of the Whig Party caused the existing opposition to be, for the most part, unorganized and ineffective. One of the major issues of the 1856 election in Florida was an attempt to split West Florida off and create a new state. The movement towards secession which saw the creation of vigilant and regulator type groups had a strong

effect on reducing the level of vocal opposition. The vote for secession was done by an extra-legal body in spite of opposition. As the war progressed, and the fortunes of Florida faded, the group in power were more concerned with the protection of their own Middle Florida region than with other portions of the state. This abandonment contributed to the rise of dissension in other regions, particularly East Florida. Further dissension and disorganization leading to a fragmentation of power and authority were caused by friction and competition between duly constituted and elected governmental bodies and officials and a number of parallel level extra-legal ones created for the "emergency."

On a higher level, the Confederacy was created to uphold the principle of states rights. The experience of trying to mobilize and employ effectively a national war effort under this principle was a highly frustrating one for officials at all levels of government that led to bitter feelings, omissions, duplication of effort, wastage of scarce resources, and eventually to defeat. The political environment within Florida during the Civil War years was one that could be exploited by the Union.

Early in the Civil War, Florida found herself abandoned militarily by the Confederacy. There was nothing of any major strategic importance to the Confederacy within Florida and her liabilities, particularly her long, vulnerable coastline and limited transportation network, far outweighed

her assets. Her manpower resources were comparatively limited in relation to other southern states and, after an early period of recruiting competition between state and Confederacy, most of what was even remotely available ended up in the Confederate army and had departed the state by the end of 1862. When this happened, Florida was left to defend herself as best she could using her own resources. These resources included a military force that was small in size, poorly armed, lacking in training, more irregular than regular, and widely spread over the state. By early 1862, Federal forces occupied Fernandina, St. Augustine, Key West, and Fort Pickens and controlled Pensacola, Apalachicola, and the entrances to the St. Johns and Chattahoochee rivers. A tightening Federal naval blockade strangled the state's economic life, and a continuing series of small scale raids by Federal forces caused destruction and created havoc and terror in coastal communities. Many Floridians withdrew into the interior of the state where the remaining hard corps of loyal Confederate supporters were congregated. By the end of 1863, Florida's enthusiasm for secession had long since withered; militarily, economically, psychologically, and politically, she was vulnerable to Federal exploitation.

At the end of 1863, the Federal forces in the Department of the South, which comprised the South Atlantic coastal states, were stalemated. An abortive attack on Charleston had resulted in a stand-off, and large numbers of

Federal land and naval forces were tied up in siege operations against Charleston and Savannah that showed little progress or promise. These forces were available for employment elsewhere within the Department of the South. The commander of that Department, Major General Quincy A. Gillmore, requested permission of his superiors to use those forces for an expedition into Florida. To support his request, he listed his objectives. These included the recruitment of blacks for his colored regiments, the cutting off of commissary supplies that were going from Florida to other parts of the Confederacy, the disruption of the railroad system within Florida, and the prevention of Confederate attempts to remove rails from that system for use elsewhere. Later, General Gillmore added the objectives of opening a Florida port to trade and the restoration of Florida to the Union. The requests for the expedition were approved, and on February 7, 1864, Federal forces landed at Jacksonville, Florida, with high hopes and a very strong probability of success in achieving their objectives.

The 1864 Federal expedition into East Florida has been examined before by a number of writers. In most cases, they covered the expedition, generally and briefly, in order to set the stage for a detailed coverage of the battle of Olustee, the high (or low) point of the expedition. The emphasis of these writers has primarily been on the political motivation for the expedition, the mechanics of the battle of

Olustee, and the Federal failure to achieve its political objectives that followed defeat at Olustee. A more comprehensive view of the battle of Olustee can be obtained if it is considered within the larger context of the 1864 Federal expedition into East Florida and, in turn, that expedition placed within such larger contexts as Florida's status within the Confederacy and the Civil War, Civil War strategy, and the Civil War as the first of the modern wars.

Clausewitz defined the enemy's resources as inclusive of his fighting forces proper, the country with its physical features and population, and its allies.¹⁹ All things in warfare were interdependent, and a gain for one side was a corresponding directly proportional loss for the other side--an idea currently termed the "zero-sum game." The 1864 Federal expedition into East Florida could be seen as an early example of a military operation characteristic of modern warfare if its objectives included ones other than military and if it had the potential for influencing results elsewhere and contributing to a final victory that was more than a military victory. Further, a more accurate appraisal of the expedition can be made if it is seen within its larger and long term ramifications. In the course of the following narrative, an effort is made to examine the 1864 Federal expedition into East Florida within its proper historical context. That the expedition was sound, although too limited in both its concept and leadership, and had great potential

within the context of modern warfare is the major theme of this work. Of equal importance is an examination of the status of Florida, both within the Confederacy and within the American Civil War.

Notes

¹ Trevor N. Dupuy and Arnold C. Dupuy, "Understanding War From Historical Perspective," Marine Corps Gazette 69 (June, 1985): 55-56.

² Russell F. Weigley, The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), p. 82.

³ Weigley, American Way of War, p. 82.

⁴ Ibid., p. 82.

⁵ Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds., Carl von Clausewitz, On War (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 644-45.

⁶ Ibid., p. 645.

⁷ Ibid., p. 644.

⁸ Ibid., p. 94.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 92-93.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 582.

¹¹ Weigley, American Way of War, p. 139.

¹² Ibid., p. 146

¹³ Ibid., p. 151.

¹⁴ Howard and Paret, Carl von Clausewitz, p. 594.

¹⁵ Dupuy and Dupuy, "Understanding War," 54.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 56.

- 17 Howard and Paret, Carl von Clausewitz, p. 84.
- 18 Dupuy and Dupuy, "Understanding War," 56.
- 19 Howard and Paret, Carl von Clausewitz, p. 78.

CHAPTER II CIVIL WAR STRATEGY--GENERAL

At the start of the Civil War the Union found itself facing an extremely difficult undertaking. To meet President Lincoln's objective of preserving the Union, it would be necessary to conquer the South completely and reassert the Union's authority over an area that was too large totally to occupy or control. Further, the nature of the Confederacy presented little in the way of objectives whose seizure by the Union would present significant results in political, economic, or moral terms. Complicating the task was the dubious goal of gaining and retaining the loyalty of a people conquered by force. To achieve the primary objective of restoring the Union meant that at some time the South must yield to the Union with some degree of voluntary consent as their allegiance could not be held forever by force. All of this had to be accomplished in a short time because a long war would make the task of winning the "hearts and minds" of the rebelling Southerners more difficult. Accomplishment of these tasks indicated the need for an offensive strategy leading to rapid success with as little disruption of the South's non-military related areas as possible.

The South, on the other hand, saw the outbreak of the war as a legitimate rebellion against the existing authority

of the federal government. A new government, the Confederate States of America, had been created and this new nation had only to demonstrate that it could maintain its integrity as a sovereign, independent nation by protecting its citizens and their property. Since the Southerners began the war in what amounted to substantial control of their own territory, they needed only to protect what they had in order to achieve victory. To accomplish this, a defensive strategy appeared to be required. Anything short of being totally defeated and physically dragged back into the Union would be a southern victory.

The commanding general of the United States Army when the war began on April 12, 1861, was seventy-five year old Winfield Scott. His previous experience in grand strategy had been as the commanding general of the American force that had landed at Vera Cruz during the Mexican War. In a completely unorthodox campaign, he had cut himself off from his base and lines of supply from the sea and advanced inland. Outnumbered three to one, he maneuvered through enemy-controlled territory to overthrow the existing Mexican government by seizing its capital, Mexico City. His experience of defeating the Mexicans with a combination of blockade, raiding operations, and a seaborne expedition that culminated in the seizure of the enemy capital may have influenced the strategy he designed for the Union. Capitalizing on the superior Union naval power, he proposed

to subject the Confederacy to a huge seige aimed at strangling the Confederate economy by preventing the export of its major agricultural asset, cotton, and at the same time preventing the import to the region of manufactured items. Time would be bought during which superior armies could be raised and trained. These forces, in conjunction with naval support, would then be used in a series of regular approaches along the many rivers that penetrated the South to dismember the Confederacy. The contemporary press, seizing on the metaphor of a huge snake putting lethal pressure on its quarry, labled the plan the "Anaconda Policy."¹

President Lincoln saw the strategic objectives as broader than just military. In restoring the Union, he was concerned with the task of retaining that Union permanently without the necessity for continued use of force. He was also concerned that the war not deteriorate into a vicious guerilla war of resistance by the vanquished. President Lincoln's choice of strategy was similar to that of General Scott's. The president believed that the North should capitalize on its superior strength by applying pressure simultaneously on all southern frontiers on the theory that the South would be forced to spread itself too thin somewhere and develop weaknesses or gaps that could be exploited by the northern forces. Military success by itself was insufficient in this type of war. For President Lincoln, total victory for the North meant success in the battle for

hearts and minds as well as in military affairs. The president described his policy as follows:

In considering the policy to be adopted for suppressing the insurrection, I have been anxious and careful that the inevitable conflict for this purpose shall not degenerate into a violent and remorseless revolutionary struggle. . . .The Union must be preserved and hence, all indispensable means must be employed. We should not be in haste to determine that radical and extreme measures, which may reach the loyal as well as the disloyal, are indispensable.²

The problem for the Union, therefore, was to defeat the South totally, in as short a time as possible, and in such a manner as to restore eventually the Union by voluntary consent of the vanquished, without permitting the embittered losers from shifting into a perpetual guerilla war. The North had an extremely difficult task which, in 1861, must have seemed impossible to many. While the North had many advantages in manpower and industrial resources, it would take time to mobilize these resources fully and bring them to bear on the opponent. The North was further divided in opinion concerning the war and the principal European powers seemed more inclined to support a divided rather than a unified United States. Time seemed to be very much on the side of the Confederacy and the type of war General Scott and President Lincoln envisioned, economic, moral, and political as well as military, seemed to play into the hands of the South. It was the type of war that required time and patience, one that would grate on the nerves of those used to short, decisive wars. Further, this strategy was not popular

with the leading military thinkers of the time who were proponents of the Napoleonic style of warfare which seemed to feature the decisive, climatic type of battle.

With the advent of Napoleon, warfare in the nineteenth century had been revolutionized. Where once it had involved only relatively small numbers of professionals, with the introduction of citizen armies and nationalistic spirit, war under these conditions involved the total resources of a nation, human and material. It was no longer possible to defeat the enemy by winning a few campaigns; breaking the enemy's will to resist now involved much greater physical, psychological, and monetary effort than had older styles of warfare.

The mass army, the nation in arms sustained by nationalistic fervor, was the signal feature of the new Revolutionary mode of war. A strategy of annihilation employing the climatic Austerlitz kind of battle was Napoleon's characteristic means of precipitating decision out of the new mode of warfare.³

The principal interpreter of Napoleonic strategy to Americans by way of text books and instructors at West Point was Jomini.⁴ As a product of the Enlightenment, Jomini created what he felt were the natural, timeless, and unchanging principles of warfare. Key among these principles was the idea of bringing the maximum force to bear on the decisive point in the theater of operations at the same time one's opponent could only muster an inferior portion of his strength at the same point. Central to this objective was

the consideration of lines of communication in which it was decidedly advantageous to operate on interior lines in order to be able to concentrate one's strength more rapidly than one's opponent which would give one the desired superiority of force. Jomini's emphasis on decisive points and lines of communication seemed to make war more a contest for control of geographic areas than for the destruction of the enemy's armies which had been characteristic of eighteenth century warfare rather than Napoleonic.⁵ Nevertheless, there is no mistaking Jomini's emphasis on offensive war and, in particular, achieving the decisive result by destroying the enemy's forces to the point that states or provinces with no organized forces to defend them, would fall.⁶

In the years before the Civil War, American strategic thinking assumed an external opponent in a future war and, therefore, a military role that would be largely a defensive one of self-protection and self-preservation. As reflected in the works of both Denis Hart Mahan and his student, Henry Wager Halleck, two of the foremost exponents of the Jominian interpretation, there was a strong emphasis on a well-prepared defensive. As Weigley summed it up:

To the degree to which they endorsed offensive warfare in spite of its risks, they envisioned mainly a limited war for territorial objectives of the sort favored by Jomini himself and conducted in Mexico by Winfield Scott. If an offensive strategy was to be adopted, it was by implication to be a strategy of attrition or a political strategy, not a strategy of annihilation. One ought to seek the greatest damage to the enemy with the least exposure to himself, as Denis Mahan said; and

one ought to seek "political diversion, . . . in favor of the invading force," as Halleck said. 7

On a tactical level, "all of the official and unofficial manuals available in the early 1860's advocated defensive tactics."⁸ The American military tradition at the start of the Civil War was an inherited one--combined strategic defense with tactical offense. Few military leaders appreciated the effect of time and changing technology on tactics and strategy.

The American Civil War was not fought according to the text books. Russell F. Weigley, in his study, The American Way of War, observed:

It was less anyone's academic teaching about strategy and war, Jomini's, Mahan's, or Halleck's, and less even Winfield Scott's restrained practice of war that dominated the imaginations of American military men in the nineteenth century, than the arresting image of Napoleon. American soldiers were generally not scholars anyway, and the study of strategy was a small part of the course at West Point. Without concerning themselves much with the theory of strategy, but from the kind of knowledge of Napoleon's campaigns possessed by any reasonable well-educated man in the nineteenth century, American soldiers knew that the climatic battle was the central feature of the Napoleonic art of war, with the destruction of the enemy army both physically and morally the battle's aim. And for soldiers, to emulate the great Napoleon was a much more compelling motive than to master the study of strategic theory.⁹

The admirers of the Napoleonic methods of warfare also, for the most part, failed to see on a grander scale how these same methods contained the seeds of Napoleon's own destruction by the very peoples he had conquered.

By the middle of that century, technology in warfare had advanced to the point where methods that had proven so successful for Napoleon would be prohibitive in cost by more modern generals. For example, Napoleon had concentrated his artillery close to the enemy's lines and used its combined destructive power to blow open huge gaps in those lines which were exploited by his infantry as they charged into the gaps. The widespread introduction of the rifled weapon made that practice highly costly as it increased greatly the range and accuracy of the piece carried by the common infantryman who could now easily pick off the gunners servicing any artillery employed as close as Napoleon had employed his artillery. The range of the standard U.S. Army .58 caliber rifle, adopted in 1855, was from 400 - 600 yards as compared with the older, smoothbore musket which was 200 yards or less. In tactical terms, this meant that artillery would have to be employed much further to the rear where it was less vulnerable but also less effective in its shock value, particularly if the opposing infantry had anything in the way of cover. Even with the introduction of rifled artillery, those guns were limited in their offensive effectiveness against sheltered troops and, since the shrapnel shell was not invented until later in the century, the advantage militarily during the time period of the Civil War was with the well-prepared defense. Troops in the open attacking

prepared defensive positions containing rifled weapons and artillery were committing suicide. As Weigley put it:

So destructive did rifled muskets and cannons prove themselves to be against attacking infantry in the American Civil War that attackers could win battlefield decisions if at all only through immense sacrifices of their own manpower.¹⁰

Unfortunately, many military leaders were still so captured by the Napoleonic concept of the climactic battle won by massed artillery and the bayonet charge that they paid a costly price for their ignorance. The first installment was exacted at the First Battle of Manassas or Bull Run. Major General (by then) Halleck, the leading American proponent of the Jominian interpretation, had dismissed President Lincoln's proposal of simultaneous pressure on the entire southern frontier as "military amateurism" because it failed to concentrate maximum strength on decisive points. The proposal for a direct attack on Richmond from Washington, on the other hand, presented the desired Jominian characteristics of concentration and advantageous use of interior lines that promised to lead to a climatic battle and a war of short duration. Scott yielded to the "On to Richmond" forces. The disastrous (for the North) First Battle of Manassas should have been a learning experience; it was not. It did demonstrate two important points: the war would not be a short one and the value of rail transportation. It also led the South to an overconfident attitude that would hamper later southern efforts.

The North was committed to adopting an offensive strategy in order to accomplish its primary aim of reasserting the Federal government's authority over the rebelling states. The implications were that the North would have to operate in areas where the population was unfriendly, occupying and garrisoning those areas that had been overrun. Each advance would lengthen lines of supply and communication requiring still further dispersion of forces to protect those lines, and requiring large numbers of troops to be engaged in essentially non-combat roles. The longer the war went on, the chances were that frustrations would push the Union leadership into harsher and more vindictive policies. In turn, this would lead towards that type of violent, remorseless guerilla warfare President Lincoln feared. A solution might be found that would also solve a major strategic problem the North had in trying to decide how to utilize most effectively its almost total naval superiority against its continental enemy.

General Scott's Anaconda policy had planned to use the navy to penetrate the Confederacy by way of its numerous rivers.¹¹ That policy looked better after the failure of First Manassas and looked even better after Flag Officer Silas H. Stringham proved the superiority of the shell gun over earthen coastal defenses at the Hatteras Inlet to Pimlico Sound on August 27-28, 1861. Using the mobility of steam power to keep his ships moving, Flag Officer Stringham

pounded the forts protecting the inlet into submission which questioned the then accepted dictum of the advantage of coastal forts over ships. One of the traditional military policies that the South had inherited when it seceded was that of coastal defense. It was a rude shock to discover the vulnerabilities of that policy. This lesson was further reinforced on November 7, 1861, when Flag Officer Samuel F. DuPont forced the evacuation of the Confederate forts guarding Port Royal Sound after bombarding them for some five hours. In demonstrating the advantages the shell gun and the steam engine had given naval forces, Flag Officer DuPont gained for the Union a sheltered harbor midway between Charleston and Savannah to use as a base for the ships that would blockade the entire south Atlantic coast. In addition, the Union gained access to a system of inland waterways from Charleston to the St. Johns River in Florida.

Union Major General George B. McClellan, who had a hand in hastening Winfield Scott's retirement, was probably closer to Scott's philosophy of trying to reach his objective by maneuver rather than fighting than other contemporary Union leaders. General McClellan, like his predecessor General Scott had done in the Mexican War, chose a political objective, the enemy's capital city of Richmond. In addition, General McClellan appreciated President Lincoln's emphasis on a policy of minimal disruption and destructiveness so as to ease the problem of eventual reconciliation. He believed in

the carrot and stick approach whereby he would combine military victories with the conservation of life and property in order to occasion the least bitterness on both sides and therefore aid in restoring the South to the Union. To accomplish this, General McClellan believed that it was possible to win by paralyzing the enemy through disruption of his internal communications rather than by destroying his entire army. A combination of the strategic offense and a tactical defense was the strongest type of warfare that could achieve such a victory. Since the defenders have the tactical advantage if protected by strong works and using rifled weapons, an aggressor that seized vital points by surprise and fortified them quickly with heavy guns would force the enemy to attack despite tactical disadvantage or lose the war. Rowena Reed summed up General McClellan's grand plan to defeat the Confederacy in these words:

That the object of war is to force the enemy to give up, that this object is more easily and cheaply obtained by strategy than combat, that more powerful weapons required maneuvering the enemy into assuming the tactical offensive, that railroads created new objective points and increased the possibility for maneuver for both sides but tied enemies to fragile supply lines, and that combined operations afforded an invading army the means to adopt the strategic offensive without risk to its communications.¹²

General McClellan also saw, more so than many other contemporary military leaders, the interdependence of the elements of war. Carl von Clausewitz wrote:

In the absolute form of war, where everything results from necessary causes and one action rapidly affects another, there is, if we may use the phrase, no

intervening neutral void. Since war contains a host of interactions since the whole series of engagements is, strictly speaking, linked together, since in every victory there is a culminating point beyond which lies the realm of losses and defeats--in view of all these intrinsic characteristics of war, we say there is only one result that counts: final victory. Until then, nothing is decided, nothing won, and nothing lost. In this form of war we must always keep in mind that it is the end that crowns the work. Within the concept of absolute war, then, war is indivisible, and its component parts (the individual victories) are of value only in relation to the whole.¹³

The telegraph and the railroad were technological advances that appeared to tip the balance away from the strategic offense in favor of the defense. An invading army could find itself quickly opposed by defenders who were able to concentrate rapidly and in greater strength at the point of attack. Facility for transporting heavy guns and fortification materials, ammunition, and supplies and the use of the telegraph to coordinate movement of several independent elements against widely scattered objectives forced the enemy to disperse to meet various threats, thus modifying the principle of strategic concentration and allowing the use of larger forces than limited rail facilities could have maintained on a single front. Rail junctions and depots, therefore, became points of concentration and the new strategic targets because of the necessity of rail transportation in moving troops and supplies over long distances. Seapower could be used to project invading armies unexpectedly against these strategic points and then support and maintain these invading armies,

freeing them from being tied to a vulnerable rail network. Union naval superiority gave this option to the North and denied it to the South. The key was not to seize one point or destroy one army in the Napoleonic concept of the climatic battle, but to use the waterways of the South as a means of penetrating deep into its interior to seize key communication junctions, fragmenting and paralyzing the South's supply, reinforcement, and communications abilities. Southerners would then be forced to attack strongly fortified positions protected by Union gunships.

General McClellan had been a railroad executive and his early war experiences in West Virginia had impressed upon him both the advantages and vulnerabilities of railroads.¹⁴ Militarily, the South had to depend on two major rail networks to move its armies and keep them supplied. (See Figure 2-1.)¹⁵ One network consisted of the lines running from the Mississippi Valley eastward and the other network was made up of the lines that ran along the eastern seaboard. George Edgar Turner pointed out:

A vital weakness was a lack of north-south connections in the eastern and seaboard regions to a number of short lines in the Deep South to Virginia. Further, the lines were not supplemented by waterways, natural or artificial. In the eastern area, the rivers ran the wrong way for the Confederacy.¹⁶

The nature of the southern railroad system presented a relatively few strategic choke points whose seizure by the North could have a disastrous effect on the South. These included Goldsborough, Charleston, Selma or Montgomery, and

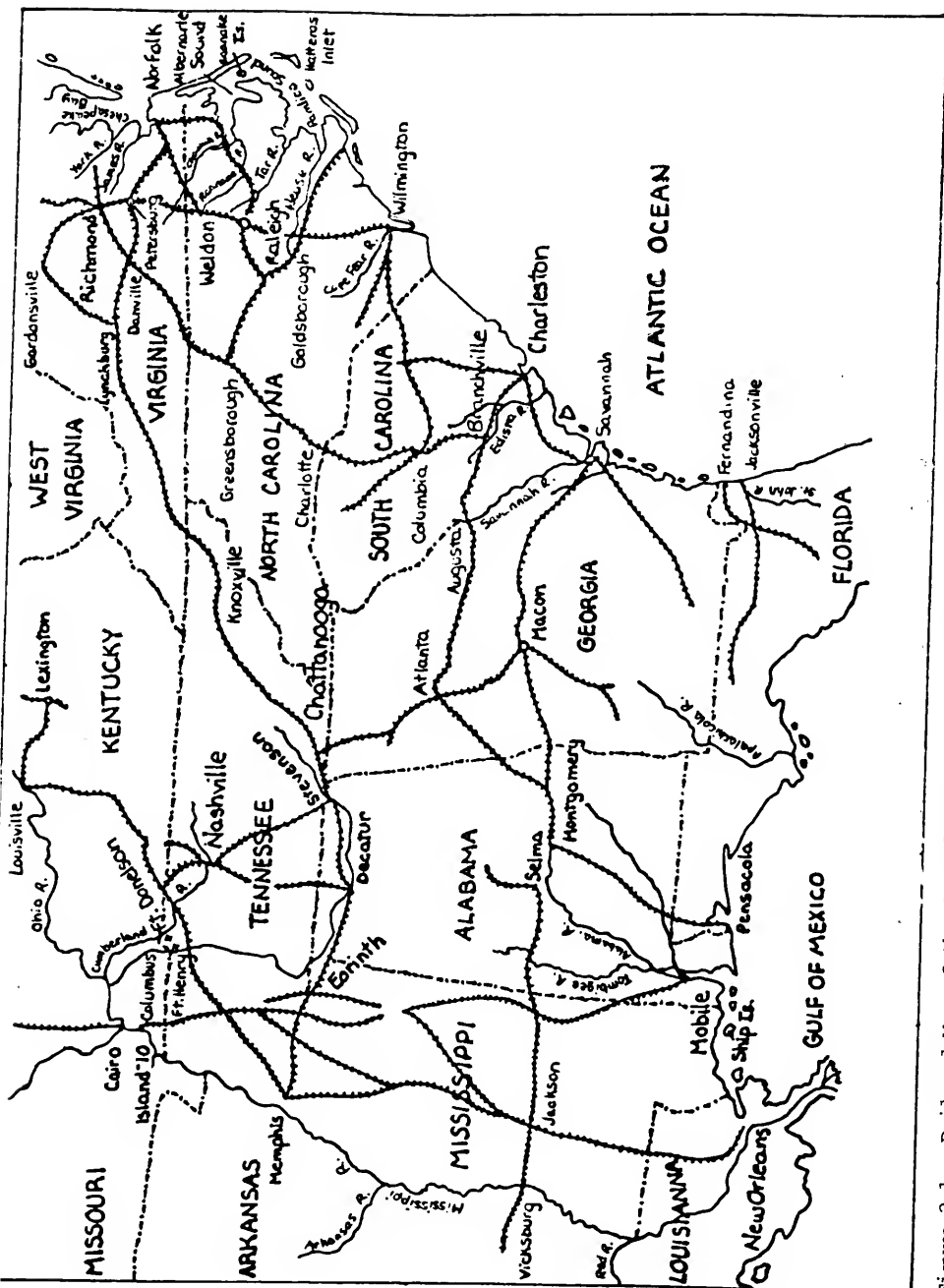


Figure 2-1. Railroad Map of the Confederacy (1861) from Reed, p. xvii (used by permission of the publisher).

Jackson. Significantly, all of these strategic points except Knoxville were accesible by water.¹⁷

There is little evidence to show that at the outbreak of the war, the importance of railroads was fully appreciated. However, after it became apparent that the war would not be a short one, there was a growing realization that important railroad junction points were major military objectives. As Turner described it:

As time passed, many of the bloodiest battles of the war were fought in defense of them [railroad junctions]. Now famous campaigns were planned and conducted for the primary purpose of capturing or destroying railroad lines of particular value to the enemy. As each succesive year ended, it became increasingly apparent that the side which controlled the railroads had a tremendous advantage, and in the end it was the Confederate loss of two railroads which led to the surrender at Appomattox.¹⁸

General McClellan's type of a strategy, the use of combined operations to seize key points within the South, was designed to take advantage of the North's greater industrial capacity, manpower, and control of the sea and to minimize the South's advantages of more skillful battlefield leadership, troop discipline, troop marching ability and endurance. It also had the potential of contributing more directly to the northern war aims of restoring Federal authority as soon as possible with the least cost in terms of disruption of social and commercial life.¹⁹ The concept of combined operations was put into operation by its chief exponent General McClellan in the Peninsular Campaign in which he used seapower and maneuver to get closer to his

objective by June 25, 1862, than any other Union commander would for another two years. Unfortunately for the North, his execution of the concept when opposed by Confederate General Robert E. Lee ended in failure. Eventually, with General McClellan's departure from leadership, the Union commanders dropped the idea of the use of maneuver through combined operations to seize strategic objectives and went back to the search for the Napoleonic type of climatic battle that saw the destruction of the enemy's armies.

In the Revolutionary War, George Washington had successfully demonstrated that the new nation could maintain its integrity as an independent nation by protecting its citizens and property. This was done by keeping the American troops concentrated and sacrificing portions of the new nation to the British. The South could not do this. The members of the new Confederacy had become accustomed to the central government performing certain functions because of having more resources than the individual states. One of those was national defense. It was incumbent upon the new government to assume this function and to provide visible evidence of having done so by stationing forces in widely scattered areas. There were few areas that were so sparsely settled or lacking in political influence that they could be ignored as General Washington had been able to do in his time. This was reflected in the activities of the first year of the war on the southern side which saw a primary concern

by the members of the confederation with local, as opposed to national, defense. Some southern states were better able to raise, equip, and train troops than others. Few were considering the situation beyond their own borders. No central authority conducted effective strategic thinking, planning, decision-making, or assignment of priorities. While the general opinion seemed to be that the southern position required a defense, there was no unity of agreement on where or how to defend. Few, if any, appreciated or comprehended the type of war it was to be. As Frank Everson Van Diver wrote:

The new Federal "Anaconda" policy, exerting pressure all along the Confederate line, brought out a new concept of war for which the South found itself wholly unprepared. Such total war, in which everybody was a cog in a national war effort, was a surprise. Civilian morale was now as important as soldier morale; civilian resistance as important as military resistance. The need for all types of supplies could only be met by full-scale civilian production. The dream of a Walter Scott South did not die at Appomattox --it died in the furnaces and clothing mills of a maximum war effort. It died when Southern women copied the "wage slaves" of Lowell and made bullets, arms and uniforms, as well as bandages.

The transition was too much. It came too fast. Jefferson Davis began to see the need of a centralized government to fight the war, but even he was unaware of how far this might have to go. Struggling to fight a national war amid state rights ideas was an impossible task. Total war could not be waged piecemeal.²⁰

Central direction of a unified effort in a nation that had been formed in rebellion to centralization and conformity to national objectives was an enigma southern leaders would try to solve throughout the war. In total war, everything is related and nothing is isolated. Mass armies and their

supply involve the whole of society and the whole of the economy. As others have pointed out, the political nature of the Confederate States of America contained the seeds of its own destruction. With all of the divisive cross-currents and conflicting interests contained within first the provisional, and later the formal Confederate States of America, there was little general agreement on both the political or operational purposes of the new government and this was a large handicap for the Confederacy to carry.

Van Diver singled out six other factors that complicated matters for the prosecution of the war by the Confederacy: (1) the geographic pattern of the Confederate States, (2) manpower, (3) leadership, (4) economy, (5) southern attitude towards the war, and (6) communications.²¹ Geographically, the South had advantages and disadvantages. Advantageously, the South had the benefit of interior lines, a long coastline that would be difficult to blockade and through which could be brought war supplies from abroad, and mountainous areas that could screen movements and operations. Disadvantageously, the interior lines of communication required a transportation network that could sustain operations across great distances, loss of control of the Mississippi which was the most obvious route for bisecting the South would open up other rivers to the invader to further splinter the South, and the mountains could also shield northern movements. Manpower to fight a short,

military war seemed adequate initially, but was inadequate in terms of fighting the lengthy, total war this was to be. Further, what was available was squandered and misused. Leadership was a mixed blessing as some were more able than others to adapt to the new type of war.

Economically, the South was simply unable to sustain a long war. The absence of adequate industrial areas in the South and its inadequate transportation system were severe handicaps. What few industrial areas the South did have became so important that they forced Confederate leadership to become increasingly defensive in outlook to protect them and thus limited movements of armies. The southern outlook on the nature of the war envisioned a short war for separation, based largely on defense, which would keep the troops close to home. No thought was given to an aggressive offensive war to gain or hold territory. As Van Diver wrote:

Such thinking helped create a defensive attitude in the Confederate mind. A defensive war would also be a war of position, which would lighten the supply problem. Certain vital centers like Richmond would be held at all costs. Once geographical determinism was firmly planted in the minds of the Confederates, they cast off all pretense at the correct strategy of eliminating enemy armies. Wedded irrevocably to ground, they buried themselves in it.²²

Communications, the final factor, was enhanced by the invention of the telegraph. The North made more extensive use of this new development than did the South which less effectively controlled and coordinated the separate Confederate armies. In a total war, the longer that war

lasted, the more obvious would be the South's weaknesses in these six factors.

Dating from the secession of the original seven states, it took about a year before the central government of the Confederate States of America evolved into a functioning governmental entity. During that initial year a temporary provisional government existed in some degree, becoming more effective as its members were selected or elected and arrived to take their positions. This organization of a government from literally nothing complicated both political and military mobilization in the South. In the spring of 1861, at Montgomery, Alabama, this provisional government created a war department and requisitioned troops by quota from the states that had seceded. The various Confederate states had already organized their own militias, seized or tried to seize whatever Federal installations were located within their boundaries, and had taken steps to provide for their own defense. Friction developed between a number of states and the central government over the idea of pooling resources for a common effort. In particular, Jefferson Davis experienced problems with Georgia's governor, Joseph E. Brown, and North Carolina's governor, Zebulon B. Vance, who were more concerned with the interests of their own states and the doctrine of state's rights than with the problems of the central government. This situation was not helped by the president of the Confederacy:

Convinced of the need for full co-operation by all the states with the Confederate government, Davis went too far in telling state governors to forget their states for the sake of the cause. To many he began to sound like a full-blown dictator, and the hostile press effectively used this against him. Not knowing how to turn the point of these attacks, Davis could only write more vitriolic and bitter letters telling his critics what they ought to do. The governors, fearful of a growing despotism, tightened control on their own state administrations to thwart Davis' centralism. To prevent strong government, they resorted to it.²³

While the reaction of the governors to the creation of a central Confederate army varied, to many it looked like a concentration of power as great as that which the seceding states had left. Governor John Milton of Florida, who was much more supportive of the efforts of the Confederate government than Governors Vance or Brown, wrote President Davis in December 1861, "The tendency of the assumption and exercise of such power by the Confederate Government is to sap the very foundation of the rights of States and is to consolidation."²⁴ A national army deprived the state governors of the ability to raise strong state armies which could be used to defend their own states; it also deprived the governors of the glory of being heads of their own forces.²⁵

Friction also developed between seceded states because of the disparity in their resources, the independently perceived threats and vulnerabilities, the steps taken or desired to be taken by those states to meet those threats or counter those vulnerabilities, and the support to be given to their state by the central government. No central direction

or priority of effort had been mutually agreed upon, and there was much disagreement about the types of military units to be raised and armed and the location, type, size, and armament of military installations to be built or improved. The result was a great deal of effort inefficiently expended in independent effort by a nation at war who could not afford such extravagance. On the necessity of central planning and common direction, the great military and political theorist, Carl von Clausewitz wrote:

War plans cover every aspect of a war, and weave them into a single operation that must have a single, ultimate objective in which all particular aims are reconciled. No one starts a war--or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so--without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it. The former is the political purpose; the latter its operational objective. This is the governing principle which will set its course, prescribe the scale of means and effort which is required, and make its influence felt throughout down to the smallest operational detail.²⁶

The southern states never came close to that ideal. An example of the lack of central direction was a major conflict over the importance of various areas of the Confederacy that plagued the Confederacy throughout the war. In allocating resources, it was generally agreed by the Confederate leadership that Virginia was of primary importance; what was not generally agreed upon was the degree to which it was threatened by Federal action.²⁷ Besides Virginia, two southern areas competing for resources were the Mississippi and the Middle Tennessee line. Each area had its partisans and their efforts to promote support for their operational

theater detracted from the overall national effort. The losers in the competition for resources were the Trans-Mississippi and the Atlantic seaboard. The Atlantic seaboard was viewed as a place from which to draw troops rather than one to reinforce. The result was that at a relatively early stage in the war, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida assumed a secondary importance to the Confederacy in relation to other areas.

The nature of the manner in which secession was carried out compounded the difficulties caused by lack of central direction. All of the states that seceded did so through extraordinary political bodies and not through their established state legislatures. These special bodies assumed various degrees of executive, legislative, and judicial powers in the separate states and developed other special organizations to handle such matters as defense.²⁸ In a number of cases these extraordinary bodies were in conflict with the state governor and duly constituted state legislatures who were also working in the same areas. The result was a multiplicity of overlapping and competing organizations dealing with the same resources and going in different directions. Central direction was not only lacking between the central government and the various states but was also lacking within the individual states themselves.

Initially committed to a general, although undefined, strategy of defense, there seemed to be very good reasons for

adhering to this strategy. The North had greater resources and a three to two advantage in manpower. The South would be exhausted quicker through offensive operations than the Union because invasions and tactical offenses caused more casualties than defensive operations, which made defense the most economical form of warfare. And finally, technology favored the defense, while tactics lagged behind. It is estimated that the rifled muzzleloader gave the defense at least three times the strength of the offense.²⁹ The attitudes of Southern leaders were also affected by a firmly established mythology of defense. This mythology included beliefs in the invincibility of limited numbers of short-term volunteer soldiers, the limitation of efforts by an aggressor accustomed to the cooler winter months rather than the warm, disease-ridden summers, and the idea that earthen fortifications could withstand the heaviest artillery bombardments. History, both American and European, seemed to have demonstrated the capabilities of the short-term volunteer and the battle of First Manassas reinforced southern belief in a short war. Too, many Confederate volunteers who had responded to the first call had to be turned away because of lack of weapons and the assumption was that they would always be available if needed. Few considered the possibility that it would be both a long and a total war, and the ramifications of these two characteristics. Manpower was calculated in terms of

military forces with small consideration given for the requirements necessary for support of that military or the drain on resources and the economy caused by the enlistment and conscription of so many men into the army. Slaves were both an asset and liability. They could be used as a labor force but they also required certain security requirements because of fear of slave uprisings. The belief that northern aggressive activities in the South would be restricted to the cooler months created a false impression that the South had more time available for defensive preparations than was actually true. The Hatteras and Port Royal Union victories demonstrated that "exposed sand forts, armed with smoothbore cannon and manned by inexperienced farm boys, could not withstand the pounding of naval guns and attack by well armed, disciplined troops."³⁰ Those operations also demonstrated the potential of combined operations and had not General Robert E. Lee instituted a change in southern coastal defense policy when he did, the war might have ended a lot sooner than it did.

Union General Winfield Scott, in creating what came to be known as the Anaconda Plan, did not initially envision invading and conquering the South. Heavy reliance would be placed on the strangling effect of a naval blockade to cut off external trade which would be indirect and inexpensive, cost few casualties, and be relatively limited in disruption of the South's economic resources. Investment on the land

side involved holding the line of the Ohio River and gaining control of the Mississippi. The coastal blockade was the responsibility of the naval department and to initiate planning on this phase of northern strategy, a group, variously known as the Blockade Board, the Strategy Board, and the Committee on Conference, was formed and had its first meeting about the end of May 1861. The members of this group were Captain Samuel Francis DuPont, U.S. Navy, chairman; Major John G. Barnard of the United States Engineer Corps; Professor Alexander Dallas Bache, superintendent of the United States Coast Survey; and Commander Charles Henry Davis. Over a period of two months, this group met and produced a series of five reports.

In response to instructions from Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles to select two points on the south Atlantic coast to be used for coaling stations, storage depots, and harbors of refuge, the Blockade Board recommended two separate expeditions, each with a different purpose. One was to seize Fernandina, Florida, as a base for the blockading forces; the other was to be a purely military expedition aimed at some location that had "greater strategic importance."³¹ By the end of August, a decision had been made and forces assigned for two expeditions, one against Bull's Bay (just north of Charleston harbor) and one to seize Fernandina, Florida. In the meantime, First Manassas and

the reduction of the Cape Hatteras forts had taken place, and the expeditions were postponed.

The army found itself with its hands full, and the navy found itself in a dilemma over the requirements to provide ships for both a blockade and to hold bases it had seized off the Confederate coast. President Lincoln knew well that it was important that the blockade be enforced by direct naval action or it would be ignored by foreign countries. He made it clear to the secretary of the navy that enforcing and strengthening the blockade was the navy's number one priority.³² By September 18, however, President Lincoln gave approval for the south Atlantic coastal operations proposed by the Blockade Board and Captain DuPont was given command of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron and General Thomas W. Sherman command of the land forces. Secretary of the Navy Welles left the final choice of the destination of the expedition to its commanders.³³ Their choice was to attack Port Royal first, and then Fernandina.

Rowena Reed summarized the effect of the successful Port Royal attack:

A large fleet and a fair-sized army had secured a permanent foothold at a vital spot on the enemy's coast. This waterborne force pointed straight at the soul--if not the heart--of the Confederacy, Charleston, and to another place of only slightly less value, Savannah. How skillfully the Federals would use the mobility and power conferred by command of the sea, and to what end, remained to be defined.³⁴

Union General George B. McClellan was one who appreciated the asset the North had in its superior navy and

the potential of its use in combined operations. Captain Charles Henry Davis, a member of the Blockade Board, was impressed with McClellan's strategic concepts and at a private dinner with McClellan discussed the whole question of combined operations. Between the two, a third operation (in addition to DuPont's and Sherman's) was planned which would be aimed against Beaufort and Goldsborough from the Federal base at Hatteras Inlet.³⁵

The attack against the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad did not succeed. Had it been able to seize Goldsborough and Raleigh early in the war, the Army of Northern Virginia would have been hamstrung in conducting large scale operations for lack of supplies.³⁶ The Union also lost a golden opportunity by not following up their victory at Port Royal. In attacking Port Royal, the fleet had expended three-fourths of its ammunition and, since Fernandina was also expected to be well fortified, had to replenish before taking on its second objective. A land attack with a high probability of success was feasible at this time against Savannah, Charleston, or the railroad. However, through a comedy of errors, the army had lost its guns and ordnance stores at sea, had no cavalry because it had not anticipated mainland raids against railroads, and lacked enough shallow draft-boats to negotiate the marshy waters between the sea islands and the mainland. At a time when the Federal forces should have been in a prime position

to take advantage of the enemy's weakness in a brilliant operation, they were their own worst enemy. Rowena Reed described the situation:

Time was all important. In November, having cracked the thin shell of the enemy's coast defense system, the whole of South Carolina and Georgia lay open to Federal invasion. Except for Fort Pulaski, Savannah had no real defenses. Charleston's harbor forts were inadequately armed and manned, and its "back door" via the Stono River, James Island, and the North Edisto River, was unguarded. Augusta, Georgia, vital for Confederate arms production and a key rail junction, was unfortified and was readily approachable via the Savannah River; the river itself was unobstructed and there were no batteries to to impede a Federal advance. The small Confederate force of four thousand men was strung out along the coast from Georgetown, South Carolina to Brunswick, Georgia. On paper there were less than 14,000 soldiers to defend the entire state of South Carolina, and most of these actually present for duty were untrained militiamen carrying obsolete weapons. The vital railroad connecting Savannah and Charleston was irregularly patrolled by five hundred state cavalry.³⁷

This situation changed by mid-December 1861.

After learning that Federal forces would attempt to repeat the Hatteras Inlet experience against Port Royal, President Davis formed the states of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida into a new department and assigned General Robert E. Lee as its commander. General Lee was authorized "to use the entire resources of South Carolina and Georgia that are under control of the Confederate Government for your defense, whether troops, munitions of war, or supplies of every kind."³⁸

General Lee arrived in Charleston on November 7, 1861, while the battle was in progress. He quickly realized that

the old system of coastal defense was no longer adequate and ordered the evacuation of Hilton Head and Bay Point islands, and shortly after, all of the sea islands. Lee was faced with defending some 300 miles of Atlantic coast broken by a series of bays and sounds with inland waterways cut off from the mainland by a multitude of islands of all different sizes. The Federals had complete control of the waterways and could move at will while Lee had some 14,000 troops, by liberal estimate, who were widely scattered.³⁹ The Federal fleet, taking advantage of speed and surprise, could land troops wherever it chose, evading the Confederate batteries which were relatively fixed, and reach targets that were crucial to the Confederacy. General Lee therefore made a critical, far-reaching decision that involved three steps.

First, all guns and forces were to be withdrawn from lesser positions. Second, if possible, an attempt would be made to hold the entrance to Cumberland Sound and the approaches to Brunswick, Savannah, and Charleston. Third, there would be constructed in front of Savannah and the lower end of the Charleston and Savannah Railroad, a deep interior line built so it would be out of the range of the heaviest guns of the Union warships and could be defended by the troops General Lee had available.⁴⁰

In order to protect the railroad, which was accessible at a number of points from the water, and utilize more effectively the scarce troops at his disposal, General Lee

created a mobile defense. Capitalizing on his advantage of interior lines, he concentrated troops in several places that were all within two or three hours by rail from either Charleston or Savannah. Additionally he used his infantry, light units of cavalry, mounted infantry, and horse batteries to guard against raids on the rail line. With these innovations he could concentrate his forces quicker by use of rail than the Federals could do so by use of water.

Throughout his new Department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, Lee ordered the abandonment of coastal defenses and the withdrawal inland to more defensible positions where the rivers that emptied into the sounds were narrow and shallow enough to be obstructed and covered by artillery. These positions could be reinforced by reserves moving by rail inside of the general line of the defended positions. The success of this change in strategy is evidenced by the fact that the South Carolina-Georgia coast was not penetrated by Federal forces until the end of the war when Union General Sherman uncovered its defenses from the rear in his march from Atlanta to the sea. When the Federal forces in Port Royal finally got around to attempting a land operation, the possibilities of seizing Savannah, Charleston, or the railroad, quickly and with minimum cost had all slipped away. Anti-climatically, the delayed attack on Fernandina was a hollow victory as the Confederacy had already stripped away its defenders in accordance with

General Lee's instructions and sent them to aid General Johnston with the Army of the Tennessee. The Federals got only the two objectives the Blockade Board had originally targeted, which, as far as the navy and the war department were concerned, was satisfactory.

The success of the Port Royal attack was not exploited, partly due to failures on the part of the Federal forces adequately to plan and prepare for such exploitation, and partly because of the timely and energetic defensive measures taken by the Confederate forces. The partial success of seizing the bases for the blockading forces obscured the opportunity which had slipped away. The Federal forces had not anticipated the possibilities that existed with the reduction of the coastal defenses at Port Royal and were not prepared to follow up that victory because of thinking too narrowly in strategic terms. However, as Rowena Reed assessed the results of the expedition, "The real failure of combined operations on the South Atlantic coast was not determined in November 1861, but five months later when McClellan, the driving force behind Federal amphibious strategy was removed."⁴¹

One other combined operation that was planned and executed early in the war deserves mention. This one, conceived by Union General Benjamin Butler, had an economic twist to it. Butler believed that the blockade was the wrong strategy because it enhanced the value of southern

commodities and allowed the South to obtain foreign credits. His solution was to seize southern ports and flood the market with northern goods which would hurt the southern economy while helping the North finance the war. While this radical proposal was never adopted, the secretary of the treasury was agreeable to issuing licenses to northern merchants to ship goods to southern ports and allowing these merchants to buy southern commodities such as cotton or tobacco in Federally controlled areas as long as it did not profit Southern sympathizers.⁴² Under this arrangement, an energetic Union commander might contribute militarily to the war effort while making a little profit for himself and the Union.

In terms of grand strategy, the penetrations of the South from the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, and the exploitations of those penetrations, combined with the drive down the Mississippi by the western armies would paralyze the South and force it to capitulate. This, in essence, was General McClellan's grand strategy (Figure 2-2).⁴³ The failure of General McClellan in the West and his removal from command marked the beginning of the end for the combined operations strategy.⁴⁴

General Robert E. Lee, based on his experience at Port Royal, was bothered by the necessity of tying up some 25,000 men in relative idleness manning the coastal defenses of Georgia and South Carolina. It served to confirm his opinion that no merely defensive strategy would be sufficient to

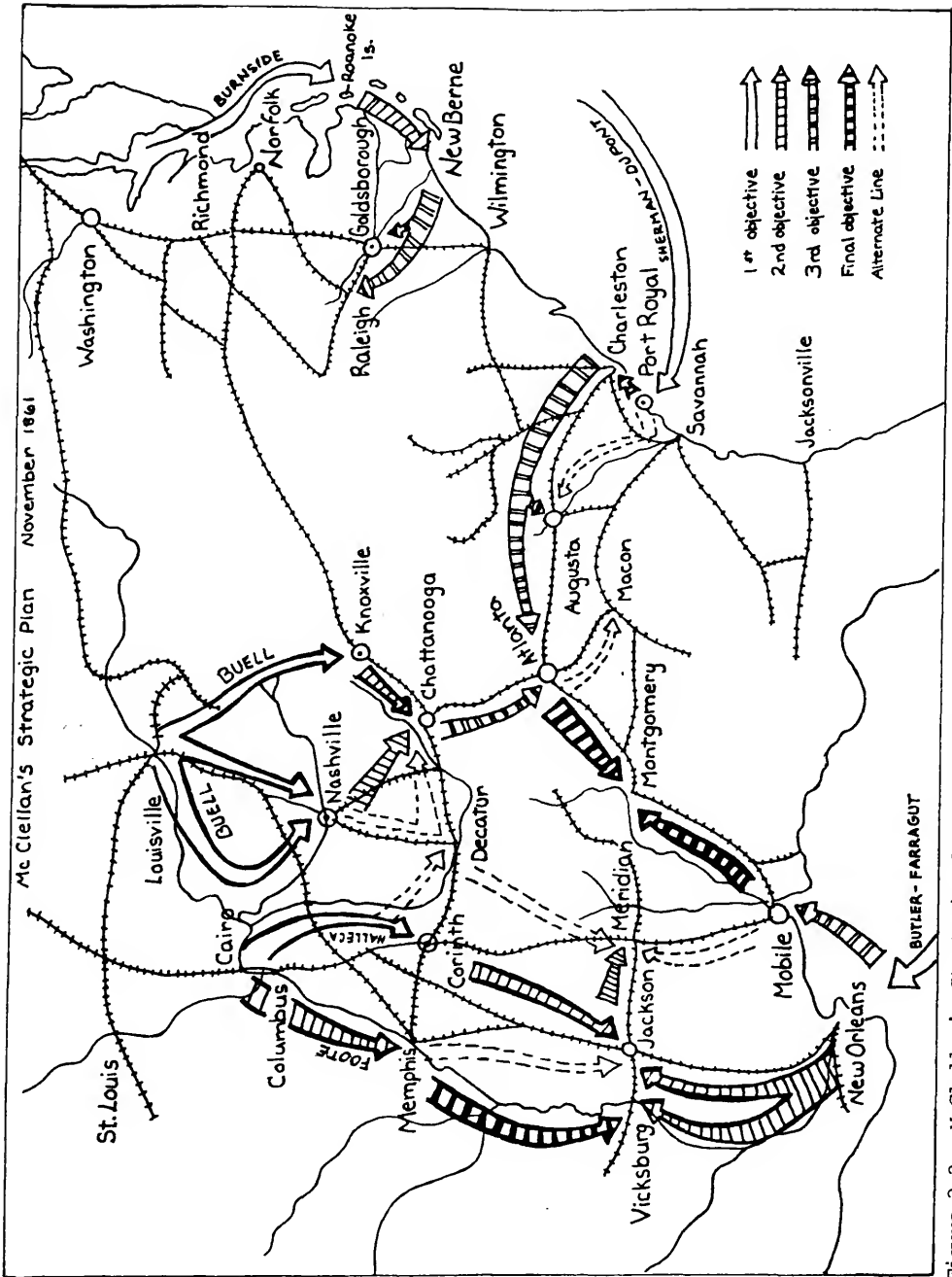


Figure 2-2. McClellan's Strategic Plan from Reed, p. 37 (reprinted by permission of the publisher)

preserve the Confederacy's independence. Rather than concede the initiative to the Union, the Confederacy must concentrate its forces and attack at some point or points of its own choosing in order to keep the enemy from having the choice of the battlefield. President Jefferson Davis termed this type of strategy a defensive-offensive, but, as actually carried out, it was more like an offensive-defensive strategy. Designed to prevent the Federals from attacking anywhere or everywhere, it involved taking the initiative and even carrying the war into the enemy's country. It also hoped to destroy or capture one or more major Union armies. Their attempts to prosecute this type of strategy eventually ruined the Confederate army. Grady McWhiney and Perry Jamieson described the results of this strategy:

Confederate forces attacked in eight of the first twelve big battles of the war, and in these eight assaults 97,000 Confederates fell--20,000 more men than the Federals lost in these same battles. The first twelve major campaigns of the war, those in which the total casualties exceeded 6,000 men were Shiloh, Fair Oaks or Seven Pines, Seven Days, Second Manassas, Sharpsburg, Perryville, Fredericksburg, Murfreesboro, Chancellorsville, Vicksburg, Gettysburg, and Chickamauga. The Confederates clearly assumed the tactical offensive in all of these battles except Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, and Vicksburg. . . . The South simply bled itself to death.⁴⁵

The conclusion by the same authors was that, ". . .by attacking instead of defending, the Confederates had murdered themselves."⁴⁶ In the final years of the war, the South faced critical manpower shortages. This fact, combined with the low priority assigned to the defense of the Atlantic and

Gulf coasts by the Confederate leadership, suggested that a combined operations strategy might again be profitable in terms of speeding final victory in those areas where the defensive forces were thinly spread. In addition to the military goal of causing the South to spread itself further defensively or lose territory, there were political, economic, and psychological goals to be achieved that, in terms of modern warfare, might be profitable to the aggressor. All that was lacking was leaders with the vision to see things on a larger scale.

Notes

¹ Weigley, American Way of War, p. 93.

² Ibid., p. 132.

³ Ibid., p. 80.

⁴ Ibid., p. 82.

⁵ Ibid., p. 83.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., p. 88.

⁸ Grady McWhiney and Perry D. Jamieson, Attack and Die: Civil War Tactics and the Southern Heritage (University: University of Alabama Press, 1982) p. 144.

⁹ Weigley, American Way of War, p. 89.

¹⁰ Ibid., 91.

¹¹ Ibid., 93.

12 Rowena Reed, Combined Operations (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1978), p. 36.

13 Howard and Paret, Carl von Clausewitz, p. 582.

14 Reed, Combined Operations, p. 35.

15 Ibid., p. xvii.

16 George Edgar Turner, Victory Rode the Rails: The Strategic Place of Railroads in The Civil War (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953), pp. 32-33.

17 Reed, Combined Operations, pp. 37-38,

18 Turner, Victory Rode The Rails, p. ix.

19 Reed, Combined Operations, pp. xviii-xix.

20 Frank Everson Vandiver, Rebel Brass: The Confederate Command System (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956), p. 19.

21 Ibid., p. 8.

22 Ibid., p. 17.

23 Ibid., p. 39.

24 U. S. War Department. The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 128 vols. (Washington: 1880-1901), Series I: Volume 5, p. 342. Hereinafter cited as ORA (Official Records Army).

25 Ellis Morton Coulter, The Confederate States of America Vol. VII of A History of the South, eds. Wendell Holmes Stephenson and Ellis Morton Coulter. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), pp. 310-311.

26 Howard and Paret, Carl von Clausewitz, p. 579.

27 Thomas Lawrence Connally and Archer Jones, The Politics of Command, Factions, and Ideas in Confederate Strategy (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), p. 172.

28 Gilbert Sumter Guinn, "Coastal Defenses of the Confederate Atlantic Seaboard States 1861-1862: A Study In Political and Military Mobilization" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1972), p. 4.

- 29 McWhiney and Jamieson, Attack and Die, p. 7.
- 30 Guinn, "Coastal Defenses," p. 8.
- 31 Reed, Combined Operations, p. 8.
- 32 Ibid., p. 18.
- 33 Ibid, p. 23.
- 34 Ibid., pp. 31-32.
- 35 Ibid., p. 39.
- 36 Reed, Combined Operations, p. 43.
- 37 Ibid., p. 46.
- 38 ORA, IV:1, p. 309.
- 39 Douglas Southall Freeman, R. E. Lee: A Biography,
4 vols. (New York: 1934), II, pp. 609-610.
- 40 Ibid., p. 613.
- 41 Reed, Combined Operations, p. 57.
- 42 Ibid., pp. 58-59.
- 43 Ibid., p. 37.
- 44 Ibid., p. 63.
- 45 McWhiney and Jamieson, Attack And Die, p. 7.
- 46 Ibid., p. 24.

CHAPTER III FLORIDA IN THE CONFEDERACY--POLITICAL

On January 10, 1861, by a vote of sixty-two to seven, the state of Florida adopted an ordinance of secession. The following day, the assembly members gathered at the capital building and in the presence of the governor-elect, the general assembly, the state supreme court, the governor's cabinet, and a large crowd, sixty-four of the sixty-nine delegates who had voted on the ordinance, signed it. Florida thus became the third state to secede from the Union. The formal act of secession, however, was but the anti-climactic culminating step in a series of events that had led to Florida's withdrawal from a Union she only recently joined as a state. Florida's secession came as no surprise. The state was linked to the rest of the South geographically, economically, socially, and politically. While the popular verdict in Florida in the 1850 election had been for Union, the trend in the next ten years that led towards the feeling of the majority of the people of the necessity for secession can be traced to state politics that mirrored the reaction of other southern states to state or national events.¹ In fact, by the elections of 1856 in which the radical wing of the Democratic Party triumphed, the trend leading towards secession had been firmly established. Lincoln's election

merely made the mechanics of secession quicker and easier by destroying the position of the moderates.² While the trend towards secession, on the surface, appeared to reflect popular opinion, the strength and unanimity of that opinion needs to be examined more closely in order to determine exactly how prepared Florida was to be involved in the type of total war the American Civil War was to become. Further, it would be informative to examine Florida's position as a partner within the Confederacy in terms of her relative contributions, requirements, assets, and liabilities with the goal of clarifying Florida's status within the Confederacy and the war.

Prior to 1850, the government of Florida came to be dominated by the landed interests made up of a lawyer-planter-speculator class whose strength was based primarily in Middle Florida, an administrative district located between the Apalachicola River on the west and the Suwannee River on the east. This region was the early black belt, cotton-planting area, and its political monopoly of state politics by a group known as "The Nucleus" was resented by the settlers of East and West Florida who expressed a strong feeling for separation from Middle Florida and delay of statehood.³ Regardless of political party membership, Floridians were in agreement on certain basic principles common to Southerners to include the right to carry such property as slaves into the nation's territories and the

maintenance of the institution of slavery where it currently existed. The difference between members of the Whig and Democratic parties was the degree to which these rights should be insisted upon.⁴ These differences would be highlighted in the early days of statehood.

The question of the disposition of the territory obtained from Mexico in 1848 focused attention on the issue of the spread or prohibition of slavery into the new territories. The main issue of the congressional election of 1850 in Florida was the Compromise of 1850. People who favored the Compromise were considered Union men and those who opposed it, disunionists or secessionists. A Union man, the Whig candidate Edward C. Cabell, won, but the election revealed the existence of a strong group, especially in the middle counties, favoring disunion. The leading Whigs in Florida considered themselves as the defenders of southern rights and the theory of states' rights. They were Union men but believers in the rights of states within the Union.⁵ While the Whigs in Florida won the election, their margin of victory was smaller than it had been in the previous election, and they lost control of the General Assembly.

The election showed a loss of confidence by the people in the Whig party, and a long range effect of the Compromise of 1850 on the party structure in Florida caused a split between the Florida Whigs and the northern wing of the party whose strong Free Soil element had opposed the Compromise.

This was reflected in the rise of Constitutional Union Clubs and the infiltration into the Democratic party of some Whigs who feared for southern rights. The losing "radical" Democrats were opposed to the Compromise through most of 1851 and in reaction to its support by the northern wing of the party, they formed States' Rights Associations in Gadsen, Jefferson, Madison, and other Florida counties.⁶ Both the Southern Rights Associations and Constitutional Union Clubs were movements aimed at rallying Southerners of both parties to their banners.⁷ The two years after 1850 revealed the damage that had been done to political parties. There were divisions between northern and southern wings of both major parties and divisions within those wings.⁸

Between 1850 and 1860, the most important developments in Florida were the steady development of a militant pro-slavery sentiment, the spread of cotton fields, and the construction of railroads. Those who owned the cotton fields, promoted the railroads, and controlled the government were slaveholders.⁹ During this time period, the patterns of immigration into the state showed that the number of South-Carolina-born inhabitants had almost doubled, growing from 4,470 in 1850 to 8,284 in 1860, and the number of settlers who had come from Georgia increased by 50 percent, increasing from 11,316 to 17,550 in the same period.¹⁰ Most were Democrats who brought with them their traditions to include the strong support of states' rights that had been

championed by the South Carolinian, John C. Calhoun. A number of South Carolinians had originally moved to Florida in the 1830s when their native state had experienced economic hard times. As a group, those from South Carolina and Georgia composed one third of the total population by 1860, and were the largest group of non-native Floridians.¹¹ While a number of those coming into the state most probably moved to the frontier areas of East and South Florida, it may be assumed that some settled in Middle Florida and may have influenced the shift of some of the counties in this section, which had been early Whig strongholds, into the Democratic party fold.¹²

Florida's rapid economic and social development in the years before 1860 had been typical of other southern states based on the traditional lines of a staple-crop economy and its accompanying social structure. The basis for this economic and social system was slavery, and "slavery underlay in some fashion every question of public moment taken up for discussion."¹³ Slavery was the foundation for the southern social system and the moral, social, and economic questions raised by slavery and its spread would be the rock upon which the national parties and, consequently, the Union would split.

Within Florida, as within the other southern states, a basic question was the condemnation or approval of slavery by the Constitution. The growth of the strength in the North of

opposition to the spread of slavery into territories common to all of the states was seen as a challenge to the legal protection of southern property rights. This was reflected in the crystallization of southern public opinion against first "free soil," then "abolition ideas," and finally against "the North" without distinction. This narrowing and crystallization of public opinion indicated a stage where "either a very dangerous or very safe condition has been reached by the body politic."¹⁴

The election of 1852 was a significant stage in the decline of the Whig party in Florida. The conservatives favored the nomination of Millard Fillmore but his rejection by the national party in favor of Winfield Scott who was the choice of the Free Soil element of the party confused and divided the Florida Whigs. George T. Ward, the Whig candidate for governor, at first refused to run on the same ticket as Edward C. Cabell, up for re-election as representative to Congress, who had attacked Scott for his silence on the Compromise. The result was a pro-Scott and an anti-Scott man on the same ticket.¹⁵ In contrast to the Whigs, the Democrats showed a much more united front due to their efforts at reorganization during the winter of 1851-1852. Under pressure to do so from popular opinion, the Democrats had accepted the "finality" of the Compromise and moved to a more moderate, conciliatory attitude.¹⁶ James E. Broome, the leader of the "South Carolina" wing of the Democratic

party, defeated George T. Ward for governor, and Augustus E. Maxwell, a moderate Democrat, narrowly defeated Cabell, who had attacked the Compromise, for congressman. The Whig party was never again strong enough to be a factor in a national election, and within the state of Florida many former Whigs switched to the Democratic party or aligned themselves with either the Know-Nothing or Constitutional Union parties.¹⁷ The election also marked the rise to dominance of state politics in Florida by the radical Democrats.¹⁸

The Kansas-Nebraska Act reopened the question of slavery in the U.S. Congress, inflaming anew sectional issues. The Florida delegation was unanimous in support of the act and for the idea of congressional intervention, and avidly believed that it was unconstitutional for the people of the territories to exclude slavery under popular sovereignty.¹⁹ In the 1854 congressional election, the Whigs were divided on the question of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and did not hold a state convention. Former Governor Thomas Brown, however, was nominated by the Whigs at county meetings to oppose the re-election efforts of Congressman Augustus E. Maxwell. Brown opposed the idea of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise because it was a compromise, and he took the position that the northern Whigs were more concerned over the nature of a compromise than the issue of the protection of southern rights.²⁰ Many Whigs did not buy this reasoning and shifted to the opposition parties although still claiming

to be Whigs. In a campaign based on land-grant aid to a railroad construction bill he had introduced into Congress and his party's support of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Democrat Maxwell won in a landslide. This would mark the last election in which the Whig party would function in Florida on a state-wide basis.

In preparation for the 1856 elections in Florida, the Democrats nominated two radical Democrats. Their choice for governor was former South Carolinian Madison Starke Perry, an Alachua County planter, and for congressman, Judge George S. Hawkins of Franklin County. The national political situation favored the Democrats because of the fear that if the Southerners did not act together, Fremont might be elected. Additionally, the formation and growth of the recently organized Republican party in the North greatly aided the Democratic party in Florida. Governor Broome, as early as 1854 in his message to the legislature, attacked the "fanatical organizations" that had elected a House of Representatives "purely and wickedly sectional in its character" on a platform of restoration of the Missouri Compromise line, repeal of the Fugitive Slave Act, and admission of no more slave states into the Union.²¹ The possibility of Fremont's election had been occasion for threats of secession.²² The American (Know-Nothing) Party made its major effort during this campaign, both on a local and national level. The local situation seemed to favor the

American party because its candidates, David S. Walker of Leon County for governor and James M. Baker of Columbia County for Congress, advocated cheap land which attracted many small farmers. The branch of the American party in Florida was more influenced by local issues and personalities than national issues, nominating sound conservative men who were Union supporters and opposed to the disruptive tendencies of secessionists and abolitionists.²³ The result of the election was a victory for Perry, 6,214 to 5,844, with a greater margin for James Buchanan, 6,358 to 4,833.²⁴ An analysis of the Florida election shows that the success of the Democratic party was due to a strong union between the growing entrepreneurial element in the state with the increasingly influential planter group to withstand a challenge from the small farmers.²⁵ In this election, the Democrats carried nineteen of thirty counties, the Whigs no counties, and the American party carried the remaining eleven with a strong minority in four of the Democratic counties.²⁶ Of significance was the radical Democrats controlled some sixteen newspapers and their opposition, only three: the Tallahassee Florida Sentinel, the Jacksonville Florida Republican, and the Pensacola Gazette.²⁷ At that time, newspapers were more political party platforms for propaganda than records of events. The 1856 election was the highwater mark of the American party in Florida and also marked a temporary trend of increasing Democratic party strength.²⁸

The Democratic party, after the election, concerned itself with strengthening its position within the state, which was accomplished in 1858 when it won control of the General Assembly.²⁹

In the national congressional elections of 1858, the Democratic party lost control of Congress. The South was suddenly confronted with the situation it had feared would happen. The balance of power within the nation in terms of area, population, wealth, and power had been tipped heavily in favor of the North. The results of this election were reflected in a strong surge of the disunionist movement.³⁰ In Florida, in his 1858 message to the legislature, Governor Perry called for a reorganization of the militia because of the threat posed by the growth of the abolition movement. In 1859, the governor blamed the Republican party for John Brown's raid and used the incident to request a rearming and reorganization of the state militia. The General Assembly responded by authorizing the requested reorganization along with the installation of the patrol system.³¹ The governor, in his 1859 message to the legislature also recommended that, should there be a victory by the Republican party in the 1860 elections, Florida declare itself in favor of withdrawal from the Union.³² The legislature responded with resolutions that authorized the governor in case of such a Republican victory taking place, to join with other slave-holding states in actions to protect their rights. Further, the governor was

empowered to call the legislature into special session in the event such action was necessary.³³

The pending 1860 election and its possible results were a major topic of interest, and the press in Florida began to discuss the method of secession before the election was even held. It was generally held that withdrawal from the Union would not be peaceful, and there were many examples of preparations being made for the expected war. The law reorganizing the militia was being acted upon as many localities formed companies, elected officers, and drilled, displaying unit flags made by the local ladies. In 1859, the Jacksonville Light Infantry and the Pensacola Guards were established. In 1860, the Fernandina Rifles, Gainesville Southern Guards, Tampa Perry Guards, along with companies at Quincy, Tallahassee, Micanopy, and Ocala were organized. Along with these more "formal" organizations were groups less formal, and, in many cases, extra-legal, which took upon themselves the promotion of the southern cause, as they saw it. As William Watson Davis described them:

The methods of radical Southern politicians were often dictatorial and bulldozing--causing here and there lawless outbreaks when regulators attempted to coerce opponents. Following the John Brown incident at Harper's Ferry and the organization in the North of the "Wide Awakes" and similar organizations, "vigilant committees" and companies of "Minute Men" were formed in Florida. The idea probably came from South Carolina. The professed object of these extra-legal bands was to keep an eye on slaves and those suspected of being Abolitionists. Some did more than this. They attempted to drive out of the country those persons suspected of being not in sympathy with the extreme Southern position.³⁴

Calvin Robinson, a Jacksonville merchant originally from Vermont, wrote about things getting uncomfortable for northern men in the South after John Brown's raid. On his return from a buying trip to the North, he found that rumors had circulated that he was an Abolitionist, a charge that his friends, with difficulty, refuted.³⁵ Another Northerner, a civil engineer who had been working on the railroad from 1858-1861, wrote:

But my pleasant sojourn in Florida was drawing to a close. In October, 1859, when news came of the John Brown raid at Harper's Ferry, the Floridians began to look askance at each Northerner, unless he was one who had by word or deed or both, unmistakably cast in his lot with the South and its way of thinking.³⁶

Strong feeling was evident in the period prior to the election as evidenced by the following notice:

These associations [vigilant committees] should be composed of firm, respectable, and prudent men. The election of Lincoln now so imminent will doubtless embolden many of his followers to visit the South for the purpose of spreading his damn doctrine. Let Florida be prepared to give all such a meet and proper reception. If any individual is convicted of tampering with our slaves let him die the death of a felon. If they furnish necks, hemp is cheap and oak limbs handy.³⁷

Calvin Robinson, the Jacksonville merchant, described the local vigilant committee:

The excitement waxed on and the feeling became more and more bitter:--many of the people no doubt actuated by sincere motives, and sentiments of what they believed to be pure patriotism; but there was always, all over the South, a large element of ruffianism, the necessary outcome of the dominating spirit of slavery, and the idleness of the young men. A large portion of these were profligate and drunken in their habits and had wasted their means, and were in a fit condition to engage in any exciting adventure as

they "had nothing to lose, and everything to gain." This hard and brutal element as is usual in all civil wars soon came to the surface and became prominent. The South had many of these characters in every community and they formed the most prominent element, if not the majority of all the vigilant committees. And of their outrages and extreme cruelties committed by these gangs, upon the Unionists, and their families all over the South, the tenth part has never been told.

Jacksonville had her vigilant committee and their history for the time they were permitted to operate, before the town fell into the hands of the Union forces was not different from other places in the South. It was formed of the aforesaid drunken, idle, and brutal, many of them scions of pretentious families now become pecunious from indolence and dissipation. . . .

The operations of the Vigilant committee, and indeed its very existence was not known to many of the citizens of the town up to the arrival of the Union forces in the St. Johns River. An organization of that character would not have been approved by a large number of our best citizens, especially those of them who had something of the old Union spirit left in them. There were more of these than I dared to hope during the reign of terror that preceded the arrival of the Union gunboats. As the political sky had become darker people had become more and more silent and careful about unbosoming themselves to each other.³⁸

Robinson described the harrassment he was subjected to by members of this group, the money he "contributed" to the Confederate cause, his attempts to ship secretly his stock of merchandise North, and finally, his fortification of his house in Jacksonville and the night of armed attack on this house that he fought off. An interesting thing he pointed out was the transition that took place from being able to speak out for the Union, to where such action became suicide, and finally to a point where even silence became a crime because, "if you aren't for us, then you must be against us." The only way he and a close, pro-Union friend could talk without fear was under the subterfuge of squirrel hunting.³⁹

Robinson's memoirs reveal that there was divided opinion in Florida over the question of secession and the role that the extra-legal vigilant groups, among others, had in suppressing pro-Union sentiment. William Watson Davis seized on this issue when he wrote:

The real character of these lawless conflicts immediately preceding the war has never been historically established. Did the Democrats in these localities resort to such means in order to crush the obstruction of minorities? Or were the Democratic majorities made and held by systematic terror and coercion? Or was there no connection at all between Democratic politics and violence? Certainly in these sections of the state where most trouble existed in 1860 were found during the war most deserters and "Union Men" or anti-Confederates.⁴⁰

There is no question of the many demonstrations of support for the secession of Florida from the Union that took place before the election of 1860; what is in doubt is the size of the opposition to secession that existed within the state at that time. The answer to the latter question would have a bearing on how committed to secession the people of Florida really were. Additionally, should secession take place, and the opportunity present itself, how strong would sentiment be among the people of Florida to return to the Union.

At the Democratic party's nominating convention in Charleston, the major issue was Douglas's Freeport Doctrine. After the minority platform of the fifteen Northern states was adopted, the southern delegates, including those from Florida, withdrew to another convention in Richmond. The

Richmond meeting that followed was unsuccessful and all delegates, except South Carolina's, reassembled in Baltimore. Another walkout took place and another reassembly, this time with the delegates from South Carolina. The southern platform was adopted and John Cabell Breckinridge of Kentucky and Joseph Lane of Oregon were nominated for president and vice president, respectively. With this action, the final split of the Democratic party was completed.⁴¹ With the threat to Union implicit in the 1860 election, a group of old-line Florida Whigs and conservatives banded together under the Constitutional party banner. At a state convention at Quincy, they endorsed the nomination of John Bell of Tennessee for president and Edward Hopkins of Duval County for governor. The Constitutional Unionists were prepared to wage an intensive campaign in an effort to gain power from the Radical Democrats.

The cards were stacked in favor of the Democrats. They controlled sixteen newspapers, among which were some of the most influential in the state; the Constitutional Union party had the support of only five: the Pensacola Gazette, Tallahassee Florida Sentinel, Milton Courier, Marianna Enterprise, and the Lake City Independent Press.⁴² All had formerly been supporters of the Whigs, and four of the five were in West Florida.⁴³ Democrats were the party in power and they conducted a very emotional campaign, aided and abetted by the extremists. The various groups of

"regulators" were particularly active in seeking out and destroying Union sentiment. In Bradford County, a Unionist, Dr. William Hollingworth, was attacked at night for his "anti-Southern" views and seriously injured.⁴⁴ Former Governor Richard Keith Call was one of the best known Floridians who came out publically for the Union. He and other leading citizens who took such a stand were subjected to abuse, and a number of pro-Union citizens were beaten and driven out of the state.⁴⁵

The results of the national election in Florida were 8,543 votes for Breckinridge and Lane, 5,437 for Bell, 367 for Douglas, and none for Lincoln. The distribution of the vote showed definite pockets of Bell supporters (See Figure 3-1.)⁴⁶ For governor, Milton defeated Hopkins 6,994 to 5,248. The Democrats won other races with greater majorities and kept their safe majority in both houses of the legislature. Milton's 1,742 vote edge over Hopkins was four times the margin by which Perry had won in the previous election for governor, and Perry interpreted this as evidence of the willingness of Florida to secede if Lincoln was elected.⁴⁷ Reiger, however, sees this margin as a narrow one and indicative of the fact that "a very large minority of people in the state favored the idea of Union."⁴⁸ Further, Reiger wrote:

What is significant about the elections is that of a total of 14,347 votes cast, the Breckinridge and Lane majority was only 1,369. When one considers the emotional campaign waged by the radical Democrats and

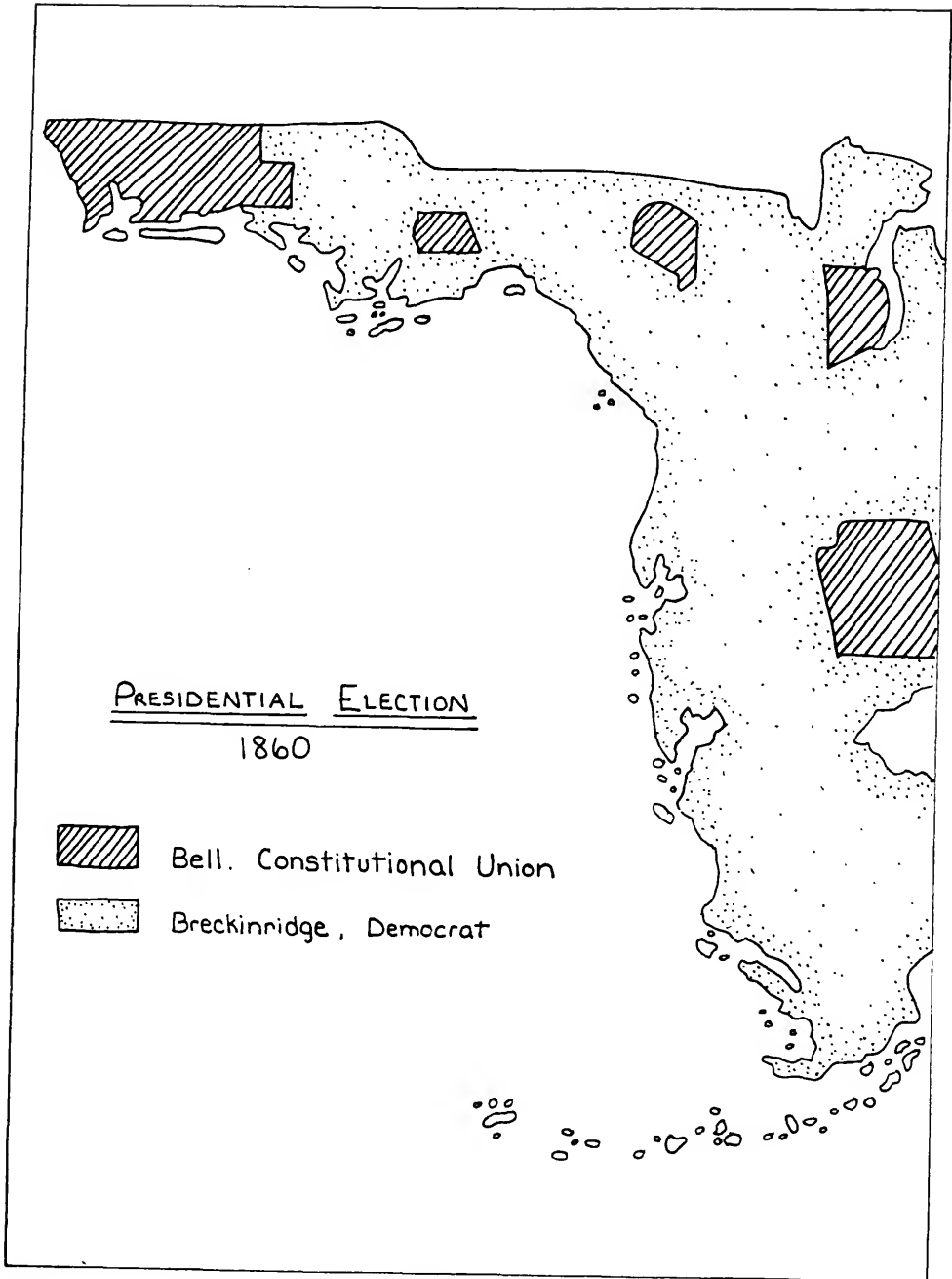


Figure 3-1. Presidential Election, 1860. Source: Meredith, p. 70.

the fact that their cause was aided by the state's political leaders, by the most influential of Florida's newspapers, and by the demoralizing effects on the conservatives by the defeat of the Constitutional Unionists in recent state elections, the result of the national election may be interpreted as a manifestation of continuing, strong pro-Union sentiment in the Peninsula state.⁴⁹

Dorothy Dodd, in her analysis of the election, states, "It cannot be asserted, however, that every vote for Breckinridge was a vote for secession, though it seems safe to assume that a vote for Bell or Douglas was a vote for Union under the Constitution."⁵⁰ The main issue of this election was sectional, and the Democrats had pushed the idea that anyone who worked for the election of either Bell or Douglas was working against the South because neither could be elected and therefore a vote for them would only benefit Lincoln. With this in mind, the surprisingly large vote the Constitutional Unionists received shows that there was strong pro-Union sentiment in the state in spite of efforts to suppress that sentiment. The secret ballot had not yet been introduced, and voting meant publically committing oneself. A railroad engineer from the North described what this suggested:

When the election took place I had been in Florida nearly three years and over one year in one locality, so I suppose I was entitled to a vote, which right, however, I did not claim, for while in God's Country a voter could cast his ballot for any one of the four candidates, in Florida one could vote for Breckinridge or let it alone.⁵¹

The election of Lincoln set off the crisis. There was a radicalization of public opinion in Florida in the period

immediately after the election. Mass public meetings were held all over the state protesting the election, burning Lincoln in effigy, pledging aid to each and every Cotton State that seceded, and calling for a convention to take Florida out of the Union. Radical speeches were made before mass meetings, and secession seemed to be the main topic of conversation at work, home, or on the street.⁵² There was increased activity in militia recruiting. In Fernandina, two companies of volunteers were formed and announced that their uniforms were of "Southern manufacture."⁵³ At a citizens meeting in Alachua County, a resolution was written to the state legislature calling for a convention of the people. A meeting at the county courthouse in Marion County saw the citizens present voting for secession while a flag with a single blue star and the inscription "Let Us Alone" flew in the public square.⁵⁴ In St. Augustine, a "secession flag" was raised, and blue cockades were worn by many citizens.⁵⁵ In the same city, the St. Augustine Examiner ran on its editorial page for four days a platform headed "The Secession of the State of Florida, The Dissolution of the Union, the Formation of a Southern Confederacy."⁵⁶ Although there was no evidence it was printed, a letter dated November 6, 1861, to the editor of the Jacksonville Standard and signed by "The Ladies of Broward's Neck" has survived and may be indicative of contemporary opinion. Aimed at the "Politicians of Florida" it stated concerns about such topics

as the unsympathetic majority in the United States Congress, the restriction of slavery in the new territories, the refusal to admit Kansas as a slave state, the threat to slave property, the threat to the social system with equality of the races, and the loss of manufactured goods from the North if secession took place. The letter concluded by calling for more aggressive action by the politicians in not knuckling under to the Northerners.⁵⁷

Governor Perry believed he properly interpreted the prevailing opinion in Florida when he wrote to Governor William H. Gist of South Carolina on November 8th 1860:

I have industriously sought to learn the public mind in this State in the event of the election of Lincoln, and am proud to say Florida is ready to wheel into line with the gallant Palmetto State, or any other Cotton State or States in any course which she or they may . . . adopt Florida may be unwilling to subject herself to the charge of temerity or immodesty by leading off, but will most assuredly co-operate with or follow the lead of any single Cotton State which may secede.⁵⁸

This opinion was not unanimous. The issue of secession divided families. Susan Bradford Eppes wrote that her father was a rabid secessionist who believed that this could be accomplished peacefully. Her brother Junius, a strong Union man who was convinced of the inevitability of war, and her mother held a belief in gradual emancipation with compensation.⁵⁹ Pro-Union feelings were generally concealed and restricted to private conversations or correspondence with very close and trusted friends. A rare exception was the continued efforts of former Governor

Richard Keith Call to rally pro-Union support. For most others, "To express in public pronounced Union sentiments meant probably a fight unless you quickly ate your words."⁶⁰

Governor Perry did not have to call the special session the legislature had previously given him the authority to assemble because it convened in regular session November 26, 1860. On the following day, in his annual message to the legislature, he stated the crisis was at hand:

The only hopes that the Southern states have for domestic peace or for future respect or prosperity is dependent on their action now, and that action is secession from faithless, purjured confederates. But some Southern men object to secession until some overt act of unconstitutional power shall have been committed. If we wait for such an overt act our fate will be that of the whites of Santo Domingo. I recommend that a convention of people be called at an early date to take such action as necessary. I further recommend that the militia laws be revised and that \$100,000 be appropriated as a military fund for the ensuing year, to be expended as the public necessity may require.⁶¹

Former Governor Richard Keith Call desperately made a number of attempts to rally opposition,

but faction leaders would not let the people hear him. Counter-meetings and closed doors excluded him. Pleadingly he argued and wrote and published, and in the name of God and his country he declared the contemplated act treason. Few would listen and some noisy, brainless fellows called him a "submissionist."⁶²

On December 1, 1860, Call issued a pamphlet containing his appeal:

My fellow citizens, on Monday last your legislature met. Secession was the watchword, and reply, and on Thursday before the hour of 12 was consummated an act amid rapt applause which may produce the most fatal consequences. This act provides for a convention of

the people to be chosen with the same rushing haste to assemble in your capitol on January 3rd next. And for what purpose? Secession of the State of Florida from the Union. I proclaim that when that deed shall be done it will be treason, high treason against our constitutional government. Is the election of a sectional president by a sectional party consisting of one-third of the political strength of the nation sufficient cause for justifying rebellion and revolution against your government? Is it not a fact that the present disunion movement in Florida is not because of the election of Mr. Lincoln but from a long-cherished hatred of the Union by the leading politicians of the State? Wait then I pray you, wait.⁶³

Despite Call's desperate appeal, a bill calling for a constitutional convention to meet on January 3, 1861, in Tallahassee was rushed through both houses and signed by Governor Perry on December 3. There had been motions introduced in both houses of the legislature to defer this action, indicating that the idea of immediate secession was not unanimous. Also, there had been a motion made to table the bill and a resolution made to submit the convention's results to a popular vote for ratification, but both of these failed. "If the vote opposing precipitate action can be taken as a measure of anti-secession sentiment, conservatives constituted one-third of the legislature."⁶⁴ December 22 was picked as the day for election of delegates to the convention under the same rules as a general assembly election. Each senatorial district was to elect one delegate, and each county was to elect as many delegates as it had in the lower house of the legislature.⁶⁵ Additionally, as the governor had requested, the legislature appropriated \$100,000 for the purchase of guns and munitions.⁶⁶

On election day, December 22, the Tallahassee Florida Sentinel printed a letter by former Governor Call in which he "hoped that reason may not be dethroned by passion, that no attempt will be made rashly to strike the American flag-- that no attempt will be made to declare Florida a Nation alien and foreign to the American people."⁶⁷ The fairness of the election is questionable. The New York Tribune later claimed:

Undoubtedly, a large segment of the population was intimidated to the point of not voting at all. A Union refugee later remembered that pro-secessionist leaders of the state had "used the most shameless and unconcealed intimidation, declaring boldly that no Union candidate should ever be nominated."⁶⁸

John Francis Tenney, a northerner who operated a hotel where two railroads crossed at Baldwin and who later left Florida on the eve of the Civil War, noted:

Florida voted itself out of the Union along with the other states, but would not have done so if a fair election could have been held. There was an undoubted majority of the people who desired to remain in the Union. The secession craze carried everything before it. The election machinery was all in the hands of the secessionists who manipulated the election to suit their end. As a sample, I will relate an incident of the election that came near getting the writer into serious trouble. There were five voters at work in a "shingle swamp" five miles down the railroad track that an enthusiastic secessionist desired to bring to the polls. He took a hand car and brought them up. As there were no printed tickets for "The Union" to be obtained, they came to me for written tickets which I wrote out and gave them at their request. Four of these men voted their Union tickets! At the final count, these tickets were found and my hand writing recognized. Suffice to say there were pistols drawn but not fired.⁶⁹

Another northerner, the Jacksonville merchant Calvin Robinson found no fault with the election itself but rather with the atmosphere in which the Convention was held:

Most of the delegates to that convention were elected as Union men. In our County [Duval] we elected two men to represent us in that convention who pledged themselves to go for the Union to the last. They had been in Tallahassee but a short time, however, before the rumor came to us that they were both going for disunion with their whole influence. When this news was confirmed, a number of the merchants of Jacksonville met, and, in consternation at the crisis to which we were being precipitated; --questioned among ourselves, what should be done to avert it. It was finally decided to send three of our number to Tallahassee to expostulate with our delegates, and if possible, induce them to change their course before the final act of secession should be passed. I was one of the three thus appointed. We found it useless to talk to our delegates as it would have been to plead with the lamp-posts in the street.⁷⁰

With whatever opposition to disunion effectively cowed or at least neutralized and the election machinery in the hands of the secessionists, it appeared that the major issue from the beginning was not to determine whether, but how, the state would leave the Union. Those favoring immediate secession were opposed by others labeled "cooperationists" who, because of economic and geographic ties with Georgia and Alabama, wanted Florida to secede only after those two states had seceded. South Carolina seceded on December 20, two days before the planned election of delegates. Dorothy Dodd believes that this may have helped the immediate secessionists although she estimated that the cooperationists made up from 36 to 43 percent of the convention.⁷¹

The reaction to the news of South Carolina's secession was recorded by two witnesses. Mary Boykin Chestnut, wife of a prominent South Carolinian, observed the reaction in Fernandina with the arrival of the news. She observed people "running up a Palmetto flag and shouting I was overjoyed to find Florida so sympathetic."⁷² Also at Fernandina, was the northern railroad engineer, who remembered:

On the 20th of December, South Carolina declared herself out of the Union. I was at Fernandina when a steamer came in from Charleston, flying the Palmetto flag and conveying the news that South Carolina, the mother, had seceded--would Florida the daughter follow? South Carolina always did claim all things for itself, but in fact Georgia contributed more to the settlement of Florida than any other State.⁷³

The convention convened on January 3 at Tallahassee with a large number of politicians present from other states. As Dorothy Dodd described it:

Out-of-state politicians, including E. C. Bullock and L.W. Spratt, official commissioners from Alabama and South Carolina respectively to Florida, constituted a strong secession lobby. The churches seemed to have favored secession, and the state administration was in the hands of the immediate secessionists. Organization of the convention also showed that they controlled its machinery.⁷⁴

John C. McGehee of Madison County was elected president on the first ballot with only ten dissenting votes. McGehee had originally come from South Carolina and had been a leader in the Florida Southern Rights Movement in 1851.⁷⁵ He had previously come out for the right of secession as not only a right but an absolute and unavoidable duty.⁷⁶ There was no

meeting on January 4 in compliance with President Buchanan's call for a day of fasting and humiliation. Edward Ruffin took this as "a rebuke & censure of the seceding states & of their cause & of the very action which this convention is assembled to consummate."⁷⁷

The organization of the convention took place on January 5 with the appointment of such officials as secretaries, sergeant-at-arms, and committees to consider various constitutional changes. President McGehee, in his presidential address, called for immediate secession. Two resolutions relating to plans for secession were then introduced. George W. Parkhill, a prominent Leon County planter, introduced a resolution to refer any action by the convention regarding secession to the people in a popular referendum and that this action be taken only after Georgia and Alabama had committed themselves on secession. Obviously, the intention of the resolution was to seek delay, but it was tabled by the convention.

McQueen McIntosh, a former federal judge who had resigned on Lincoln's election, introduced a resolution to have the convention declare secession a constitutional right and that the situation was such as to force Florida to exercise that right through the convention which had the power to act for the people of Florida.⁷⁸ This resolution was also tabled, although the Convention ordered that 100 copies be printed so that it could be discussed the following

Monday. On Monday, January 7, the crowded convention was addressed by the commissioners from Alabama and Georgia and by Edmund Ruffin of Virginia before voting on the proposals. The speakers were introduced by Governor Perry who had recently returned from a trip to South Carolina and possibly Georgia. As William Watson Davis described it:

The words of the commissioners, advance agents of the Confederacy--constituted a part of the radical appeal from abroad. They came on the wings of revolution. They counseled radical action. They found in Tallahassee a radical body to counsel.⁷⁹

The next day nearly every convention member wore a rosette of palmetto as an indication of his determination to stand by South Carolina.⁸⁰ On January 7, McQueen McIntosh's resolution, which eliminated the requirement of a popular vote to ratify the convention's action, was adopted by a vote of sixty-two to five. An effort to amend it by delaying action was defeated forty-three to twenty-four. By this action, the convention empowered itself to act for the people. A thirteen-man committee composed of eight immediate secessionists and five co-operationists was then to draft an ordinance of secession. On January 9, the select committee on secession submitted its prepared Ordinance of Secession, which was not signed by the five cooperationists. It was considered too vague and given to the committee on the judiciary with instructions to redo the wording and report back within an hour. At such time, the following ordinance was reported:

We the people of the State of Florida in Convention assembled, do solemnly ordain, publish, and declare,

That the State of Florida hereby withdraws from the Confederacy of States existing under the name of the United States of America, and from the existing government of said states; and that all political connections between her and the government of the said States ought to be, and the same is hereby totally annulled, and said Union of states dissolved; and the State of Florida is hereby declared a Sovereign and Independent Nation; and that all ordinances heretofore adopted, in so far as they create or recognize said Union, are rescinded; and all laws or parts of laws in force in this State, in so far as they recognized or assented to said Union, be and they are hereby repealed.⁸¹

Five amendments for delay were offered. Number one offered by George T. Ward of Leon County stated that the ordinance should not go into effect until the convention had been advised of the actions of the Georgia and Alabama conventions. A. K. Allison of Gadsen introduced the second amendment which only amended the first. It stated that if Georgia and Alabama did refuse to secede, the ordinance would be submitted to the people for ratification. Number three, introduced by George T. Ward, stated that the ordinance would not become effective until it had been submitted to the people. Number four was offered by former Senator Jackson Morton of Santa Rosa County and stated that the ordinance should not be passed until Alabama declared her intentions to secede. Number five, the third one submitted by George T. Ward, urged that further consideration of the ordinance be postponed until January 18.⁸² All amendments were defeated. Although the votes were not the same in total numbers, an analysis of the people voting shows that the same thirty-

seven delegates voted against all five amendments and the same twenty-one delegates voted in favor of all five."⁸³

Johns feels that the votes show that:

The convention did not show any division as to sectionalism in the state or factionalism within the ranks of the planters, artisans, or small farmers. But opinion in the state, as expressed by the vote, shows that Florida east of the Suwannee River was more radical than Florida west of that river. It is significant that radicalism was strongest in the more newly developed and frontier areas of the state where the number of slaves was not large. The radical feared abolition as much for its effect upon his social system as he feared the loss of slave property.⁸⁴

William Watson Davis attributed the fact that Florida west of the Suwannee seemed less radical to property holdings. He pointed out that 70,000 of the 77,000 "acre or more" plantations were west of the river as well as 165 of the 211 planters operating 500 to 1,000 acres. Using information from the 1860 census, Davis concluded that the larger property-holders were conservative when on their actions hung the probability of contest with the federal government.⁸⁵ Donald R. Hadd believes that the basic motivation that guided most of the delegates was the desire to protect their property against threats to what they believed to be constitutional guarantees of the right of property in slaves.⁸⁶ To support his case, he cites the numerous references of this threat made by convention president John. C. McGehee in his acceptance speech. Additionally, statistics show that 84 percent of the delegates either owned slaves outright or in trust for

others. Further, 71 percent had land holdings valued in excess of \$10,000, and of that group, thirty-one owned property valued in excess of \$30,000. Since the majority of delegates were also over forty, he feels that the characteristics of this group would indicate conservatism. But, since their actions were radical, the difference, he concludes, was their willingness to back a principle that was important to them, the sanctity of property. By doing so, they allowed this to "color or distort their judgement."⁸⁷ This line of reasoning would support William Watson Davis' observation:

The segregation of slaves, slave-holders, and estimated wealth is worthy of some notice In the seven great planting counties of Alachua, Marion, Madison, Jefferson, Leon, Gadsen, and Jackson, the valuation of property--real and personal--was \$48,000,000. The total valuation of all property in the State was but \$73,101,500. In these seven planting counties were about 40,000 of the 61,000 slave population and about 26,000 of the 78,000 whites (Census, 1860). These counties contained the majority of Florida's wealthier and more enlightened citizens, hence a majority of those who led in the crisis of 1861.⁸⁸

Meredith examined the fluctuation in the voting over each of the five amendments and felt that the delegates were concerned that either the ordinance might be rejected by the people or over the delay such a procedure was likely to bring.⁸⁹

The refusal to submit the ordinance to the people for ratification can thus be seen in two ways. The first had to do with speed of secession being more important than democratic form. There was a certain element in Florida who wanted the state to be among the first, if not the second

state, to secede.⁹⁰ The other had to do with the fear that if the ordinance was submitted to the people, it might be rejected. Reiger felt that the number of amendments submitted to the ordinance indicated that a large majority of the delegates were consistently against submitting secession to a referendum.⁹¹ In a study of a number of such conventions, Ralph A. Wooster came to the conclusion that "The Florida secession convention, like those of South Carolina and Mississippi were controlled and dominated by the immediate secessionists."⁹² He felt that a key to analyzing the vote and separating the co-operationists and the secessionists was the Allison Amendment. His assessment was:

More than any other single factor, the geographic and economic dependence of the state on Georgia and Alabama dictated the division over the method of secession. . . . It wasn't age, density of slave population, extent or size of slaveholding, not a contest between rich planter and poor white, or wholly on past political action.

The co-operationists in Florida were genuine secessionists differing from the separate state actionists not in aim but merely in tactic. There was very little unionism in the state in 1860. The co-operationist believed in secession as strongly as did the separate state actionist, but felt it more expedient to delay action until Alabama and Georgia had made a decision; should they remain in the Union, secession by Florida would be an empty gesture. For that reason, more than any other, the co-operationist sought to delay secession. Once the majority of the secession convention made delay impossible, all except five of the co-operationists voted for passage of the secession ordinance.⁹³

Dorothy Dodd's analysis was, "Though it cannot be said that a majority of the people was for cooperation, it is equally

open to question to assume that a majority was for immediate secession."⁹⁴

On January 10, the vote on the ordinance of secession was to be taken. Richard Keith Call held a meeting of some 300 to 400 people at the Lake Jackson Church in an attempt to rally allegiance to the United States but it was too late. Word arrived just before the start of the church meeting that the ordinance had been passed by a vote of sixty-two to seven. The ordinance was adopted shortly after noon on January 10. The seven who had voted against it were James L. G. Baker of Jackson County, W. S. Gregory of Liberty County, Thomas J. Hendriks of Clay County, A. L. McCaskill and John Morrison of Walton County, Isaac N. Rutland of Sumter County, and William Woodruff of Orange County.⁹⁵ All of the opposition votes were from white or almost non-cotton planting counties.⁹⁶ George T. Ward, upon signing the ordinance declared, "When I die, I want it inscribed on my tombstone that I was the last man to give up the ship."⁹⁷ The Reverend James B. Owens commented upon his signing, "Unlike my friend Colonel Ward, I want it inscribed on my tombstone that I was the first man to quit the rotten hulk."⁹⁸ Colonel Ward was later a delegate to the Confederate provisional government. He subsequently resigned that position to command one of the first Confederate regiments raised in Florida at whose head he fought and died in the service of the Confederacy.

"As the vote was taken the applause was deafening. Men whooped and women clapped their hands."⁹⁹ When the signing was finished fifteen cannons were fired and shouting broke forth.¹⁰⁰ Governor-elect Milton presented to the members of the Convention a white silk flag made by women from East Florida bearing three blue stars to represent the three states that had seceded, South Carolina, Mississippi, and Florida.¹⁰¹ In Tallahassee, a torch-light parade was held headed by local musicians, and the news was celebrated in other towns and villages all over the state with parades and speeches.¹⁰² A feeling of euphoria prevaded the state, but underneath this feeling ran another, held by such as Richard Keith Call, that the gates of hell had been opened.¹⁰³ Swept up in enthusiasm, few paused to consider the full implications of secession. Florida had taken the fatal step because she shared similar concerns with other southern states. The planter class opposed destruction of a economic system upon which their prosperity depended. The poor white was opposed to a change in the social system. There was dissatisfaction with the way the Fugitive Slave Law had been enforced and fear of a slave insurrection of the type that had taken place in Santo Domingo. There was fear of congressional interference with slavery in the territories and the threat this posed to southern concepts of property and its protection under the Constitution. And, tying it all together, the knowledge that the Republican party received

its support from the North and was hostile to slavery. Secession seemed to be a solution to many Southern fears and problems and the people of Florida were "moving with the Southern current."¹⁰⁴ Few, if any, fully comprehended the uncharted depths they were entering.

The pattern of secession in Florida deserves a close examination. Although a duly constituted and elected government, to include an executive and a legislature, existed, the question of secession was to be decided by a specially elected group of people. This election was conducted at a highly emotional time highlighted by the election of Lincoln followed by the secession of South Carolina. The state leadership, election machinery, and propaganda organs were controlled by the radical Democrats. Pro-Unionist sentiment or support was all but squelched because of prevailing feeling backed up, at the extreme, by the use of force and intimidation by extra-legal groups of "regulators." The convention was held in a highly charged atmosphere that was further inflamed by the presence of firebrands from other states. The convention empowered itself to speak for the people and consistently resisted any efforts to put its results to a popular vote for ratification. Further, it appointed its own committees that, as shall be seen, in effect usurped the authority of the duly elected officials of the State.

Florida was not united over secession. There was present an element that was decidedly pro-Union and which could, and would, later be exploited by Federal forces, particularly after the direction of the course of the war became clearer. Had the work of the convention been submitted to a referendum, the size of that dissident opposition could have been isolated. Florida was committed to an action from which there was no turning back by a radical element in sympathy with southern problems and with little consideration of how prepared, psychologically and materially, Florida was to take that action. Using figures from the 1860 census, William Watson Davis summed up this preparation in these words, "The state's rural citizenry swung out in a flood of a new national experience with no cities, no factory system, few railroads, sparse population, and less than 1,000 skilled workers within the length and breadth of the land."¹⁰⁵

Notes

¹Dorothy Dodd, "The Secession Movement In Florida, 1850-1861," Florida Historical Quarterly 12 (July, 1933): 3.

²John Edwin Johns, Florida During the Civil War (Gainesville: 1963), p. 22.

³ Herbert J. Doherty, Jr., "The Florida Whigs" (Master's Thesis, University of Florida, 1949), pp. 2-4.
⁴ Ibid., p. 22.

⁵ Herbert J. Doherty, Jr., "Florida and the Crisis of 1850," Florida Historical Quarterly 19 (July, 1953): 35.

- 6 Dodd, "The Secession Movement in Florida," 12.
- 7 Doherty, "The Florida Whigs", p. 51.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 William Watson Davis, The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida (New York: 1913), p. 32.
- 10 Seventh Census of the United States: 1850, (Washington: 1853-1855); Eighth Census of the United States: 1860, 4 vols. (Washington: 1866).
- 11 Doherty, "The Florida Whigs", pp 56-57.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 36.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 John Meador, "Florida Political Parties 1865-1877," (Ph.D diss., University of Florida, 1964), pp. 26-27.
- 16 Doherty, "The Florida Whigs", p. 56.
- 17 Edwin L. Williams, "Florida in the Union, 1845-1861" (Ph.D diss., University of North Carolina, 1951), p. 524.
- 18 Ralph A. Wooster, "The Florida Secession Convention," Florida Historical Quarterly 36 (April, 1958): 373.
- 19 Dodd, "The Secession Movement in Florida," 19.
- 20 Ibid., 20.
- 21 Journal of the Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the State of Florida, 1855-1865, 54 (Tallahassee: 1855-1866), pp. 29-30.
- 22 Dodd, "The Secession Movement In Florida," 45.
- 23 Herbert J. Doherty, Jr., "Florida in 1856," Florida Historical Quarterly 35 (July, 1956): 67; Arthur W. Thompson, "Political Nativism in Florida, 1848-1860: A Phase of Anti-Secessionism," Journal of Southern History 15 (February, 1949): 42.
- 24 Dodd, "The Secession Movement in Florida," 45.
- 25 Johns, Florida During The Civil War, pp. 4-5.

- 26 Arthur Thompson, "Political Nativism in Florida," 49.
- 27 Johns, Florida During the Civil War, p. 5.
- 28 Arthur Thompson, "Political Nativism in Florida," 48.
- 29 Johns, Florida During the Civil War, p. 5.
- 30 Samuel Proctor, ed. "The Call to Arms: Secession from a Feminine Point of View," Florida Historical Quarterly 35 (January, 1957): 266-267.
- 31 Johns, Florida During the Civil War, pp. 5-6.
- 32 Dodd, "The Secession Movement in Florida," 46.
- 33 Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Florida, 1850-1865, II (Tallahassee:1859), pp. 9-15.
- 34 William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 43.
- 35 Calvin Robinson, "An Account of Some of My Experiences In Florida During the Rise and Progress of the Rebellion," MS. P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville, pp. 4-5
- 36 Oliver D. Kinsman, A Loyal Man In Florida, 1858-1861 (Washington: 1910), p. 7.
- 37 William Watson Davis, Civil War, p.45
- 38 Robinson, "An Account", pp. 10, 18-19.
- 39 Ibid., pp. 8-10.
- 40 William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 45.
- 41 Johns, Florida During The Civil War. p. 8.
- 42 John F. Reiger, "Secession of Florida From the Union--A Minority Decision?" Florida Historical Quarterly 46 (April, 1968): 358.
- 43 Johns, Florida During The Civil War. p. 10.
- 44 William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 43.
- 45 Reiger, "Secession of Florida From The Union," 360.
- 46 Evelyn T. Meredith, "The Secession Movement in Florida" (Master's Thesis, Duke University, 1940), p. 70.

- 47 Dodd, "The Secession Movement in Florida," 51.
- 48 Reiger, "Secession of Florida From the Union," 360.
- 49 Ibid., 361.
- 50 Dodd, "The Secession Movement in Florida," 51.
- 51 Kinsman, A Loyal Man, p. 8.
- 52 William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 55.
- 53 East Floridian [Fernandina] December 19, 1860 cited in William Watson Davis, Civil War, pp. 54-55.
- 54 William Watson Davis, Civil War, pp. 54-55.
- 56 St Augustine Examiner, November 24, 1860, cited in William Watson Davis, Civil War, pp. 54-55.
- 57 Proctor, "A Call To Arms . . .," 266-270.
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- 60 William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 54.
- 61 A Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the General Assembly of the State of Florida, 10th Session (1860) (Tallahassee: 1860), pp. 10-14.
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- 63 Richard Keith Call, "An Address to the People of Florida, From Gen. R.K. Call, December 1, 1860" (1860).
- 64 Dodd, "The Secession Movement in Florida," 54.
- 65 The Acts and Resolutions Adopted by the General Assembly of the State of Florida 10th Session. (Tallahassee: 1861), pp. 15-16.
- 66 Ibid.
- 67 Tallahassee Sentinel, December 22, 1860.
- 68 New York Tribune, February 20, 1864.

⁶⁹John Francis Tenney, Slavery, Secession, and Success. The Memoirs of a Florida Pioneer (San Antonio: 1934) pp. 15-16.

⁷⁰Robinson, "An Account", pp. 4-5.

⁷¹Dodd, "The Secession Movement in Florida," 55.

⁷²Ben Ames Williams, ed. Mary Boykin Chestnut, A Diary From Dixie (Boston: 1949), p.2.

⁷³Kinsman, A Loyal Man, p. 8.

⁷⁴Dodd, "The Secession Movement in Florida," 59.

⁷⁵Wooster, "The Secession Movement in Florida," 376.

⁷⁶Dodd, "The Secession Movement in Florida," 60.

⁷⁷Dorothy Dodd, ed., "Edmund Ruffin's Account of the Florida Secession Convention, 1861. A Diary," Florida Historical Quarterly 12 (July, 1933): 68.

⁷⁸Dodd, "The Secession Movement in Florida," 61.

⁷⁹William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 59.

⁸⁰Johns, Florida During The Civil War, p. 17.

⁸¹Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the People of the State of Florida, Begun and Held at the Capitol in the City of Tallahassee on Thursday, January 3, 1861 (Tallahassee: 1861).

⁸²Meredith, "The Secession Movement In Florida," pp. 88-89.

⁸³Ibid., p. 89.

⁸⁴Johns, Florida During The Civil War, pp. 19-20.

⁸⁵William Watson Davis, Civil War p. 65.

⁸⁶Donald R. Hadd, "The Irony of Secession," Florida Historical Quarterly 41 (July, 1962): 20.

⁸⁷Ibid., 26.

⁸⁸William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 53.

⁸⁹Meredith, "The Secession Movement in Florida," pp. 91-92.

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- 91 Reiger, "Secession of Florida From the Union," 366.
- 92 Wooster, "The Florida Secession Convention," 378.
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- 94 Dodd, "The Secession Movement in Florida," 62.
- 95 A Journal of the Convention of the Peoples of Florida . . . January 3, 1861, p. 32.
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- 98 Dorothy Dodd, "Some Florida Secession History," Tallahassee Historical Society Annual 2 (1937): 6.
- 99 Long, Florida Breezes, p. 306.
- 100 New York Herald, January 13, 1861.
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- 102 Long, Florida Breezes, p. 306.
- 103 Johns, Florida During the Civil War, p. 1.
- 104 William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 68.
- 105 Ibid., p. 65.

CHAPTER IV
FLORIDA ON THE EVE OF WAR: DEMOGRAPHY AND ECONOMY

In 1861, on the eve of the Civil War, Florida could be roughly described as a Jacksonian commonwealth of small farmers and frontiersmen. Comparatively distant from the main currents of contemporary America, the way of life was plain and simple, bordering on the primitive in some of the wilderness environment which characterized large portions of the state. In comparison to other states on the eve of secession, Florida was seventh in the nation in ranking of states by area, 59,268 square miles, and thirty-first out of thirty-four states in population, 140,425. This equated with an average density of 2.37 people per square mile, thirtieth in the ranking of thirty-three states.¹ Of the total population, 77,747, a little over half, were white, 932 were free colored, and 61,745 slaves. A little less than half (35,602) of the white population were native Floridians, 38,836 had come from other states, and 3,309 were foreign born. Of those coming from other states, 17,550 were from Georgia, 8,284 from South Carolina, 4,748 from Alabama, 4,168 from North Carolina, and 1,433 from other southern states for a total of 36,183 who came originally from southern states. Obviously, this had a strong influence on Florida's solidarity with the southern cause, without even considering

the economic and political aspects. Some 2,027 people were from northern states and if put with the foreign born represented a minority of about 5,000 who might not be fully committed to the southern cause. It has been estimated that 4,000 Union sympathizers were in Florida in 1861, and this number had doubled by 1865 which would place the proportion of pro-Unionists somewhere between 5 and 10 percent of the white population.² The white male population by age shows 4,099 between the ages of fifteen and twenty, 7,339 between the ages of twenty and thirty, 4,912 between the ages of thirty and forty, and 3,235 between the ages of forty and fifty.³ This represented a maximum pool of available military manpower of 19,585 men between the ages of fifteen and fifty in 1860. Over 15,000 Floridians would see service in the Confederacy and another 1,300 in the Union which would indicate an almost total involvement of the eligible males in the war.⁴ A figure that would be of interest later to the Union forces was the number of blacks that would be available for recruitment. In Florida, between the ages of fifteen and fifty, there were 15,100 male slaves and a free black male population of 174.⁵ Eventually, some 1,044 Florida blacks would be enrolled in the Union Army, most from East Florida.⁶

This population was spread thinly over a strip of land roughly sixty miles wide from the Atlantic coast (Fernandina to Palatka on the St. Johns) along the northern part of the state westward for 300 miles penetrating deeply into Alabama.

The largest concentration of population was centered in the area of Middle Florida (Fig.4-1.)⁷ Outside of this band were a number of isolated settlements such as New Smyrna on the Atlantic coast and Tampa on the Gulf coast. Almost 13 percent of the total population was located in nine cities. The largest of these was Pensacola (2,876), followed by Key West (2,832), Jacksonville (2,118), Tallahassee (1,932), St. Augustine (1,914), Apalachicola (1,904), Milton (1,815), Fernandina (1,390), and Monticello (1,083). Further broken down, these cities contained 14 1/2 percent of the white population, 61 percent of the free colored population, and almost 10 percent of the slave population.⁸ Of the slaves in Florida in 1860, 58 percent (32,487) were located in the seven counties of Alachua, Gadson, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Madison, and Marion. In all of these counties except Jackson, whites were in the minority⁹ (Figs.4-2, 4-3.)¹⁰ The most populous county was Leon with 12,343 followed by Jackson with 10,209. A little more than one free family in three owned slaves which meant that the majority of whites were non-slaveholders. However, as William Watson Davis wrote, "They [the non-slaveholders] belonged to this class because they were too poor to belong to the other."¹¹ The counties in which more than half the families owned slaves were Columbia, Jefferson, Marion, and Nassau.¹² From the locations and numbers of slaves and free colored, Roland M. Harper concludes, "As in other Southern

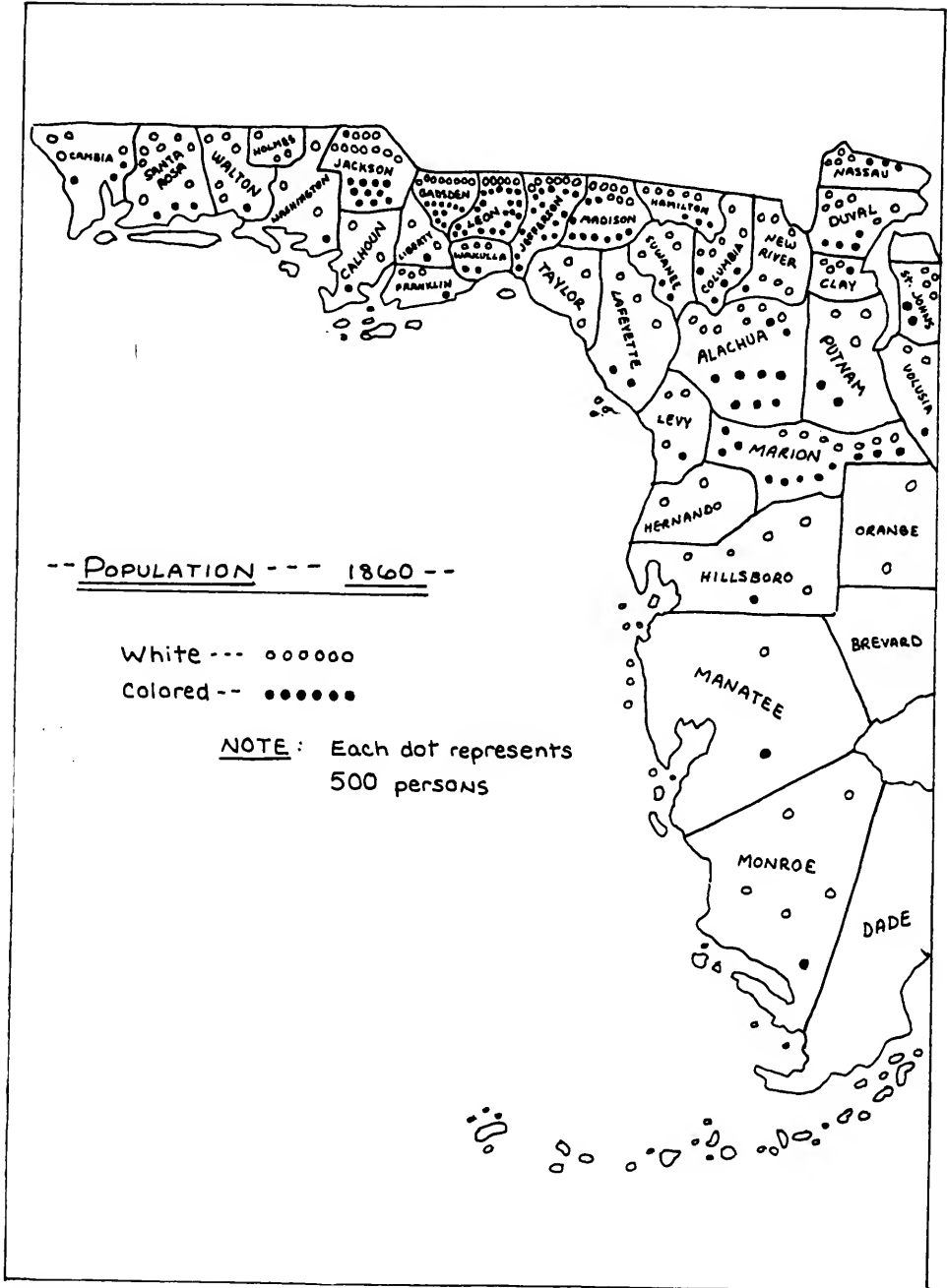


Figure 4-1. Population, 1860. Source: Meredith, p.8.

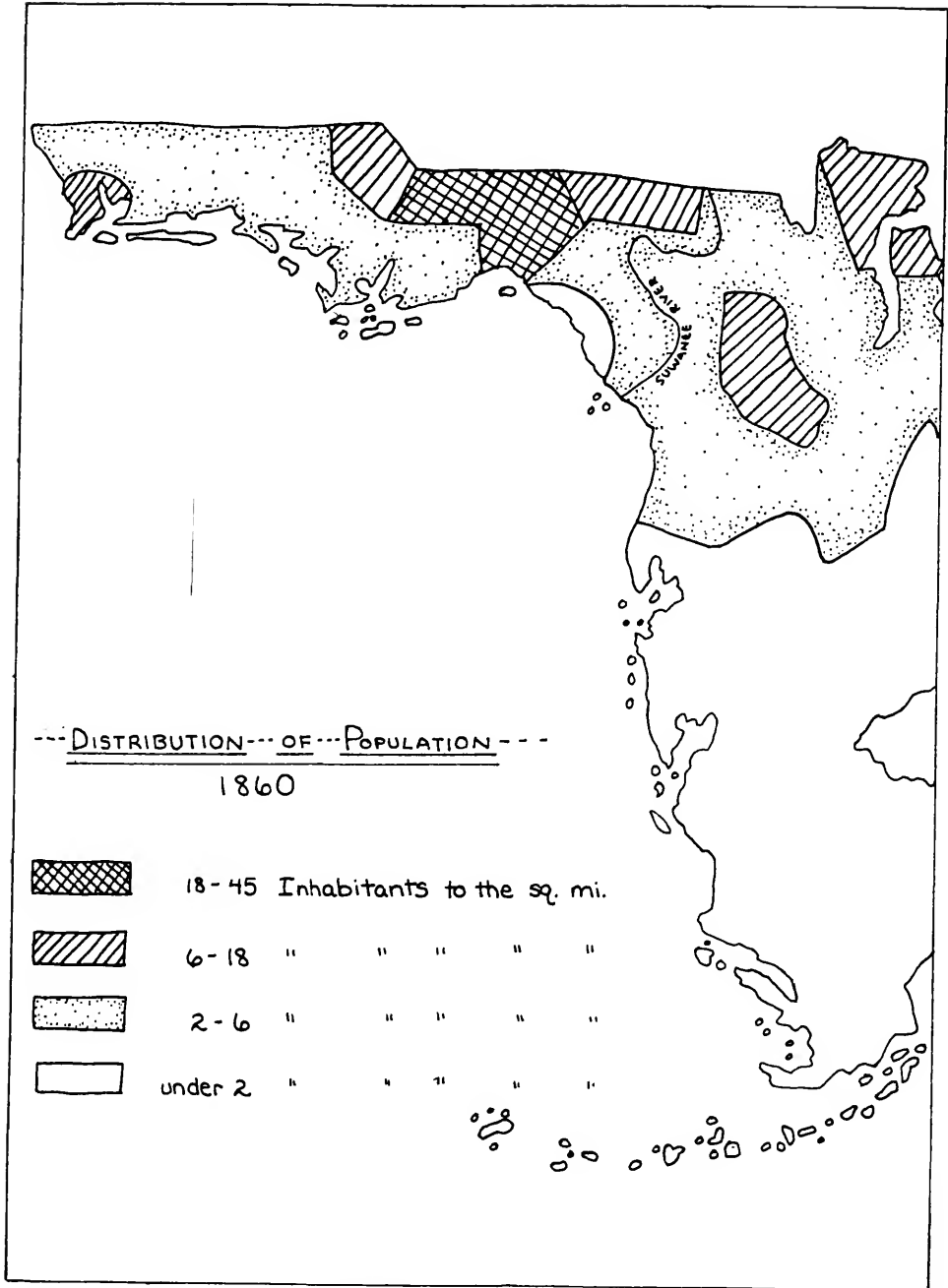


Figure 4-2. Distribution of Population, 1860. Source: Meredith, p. 5.

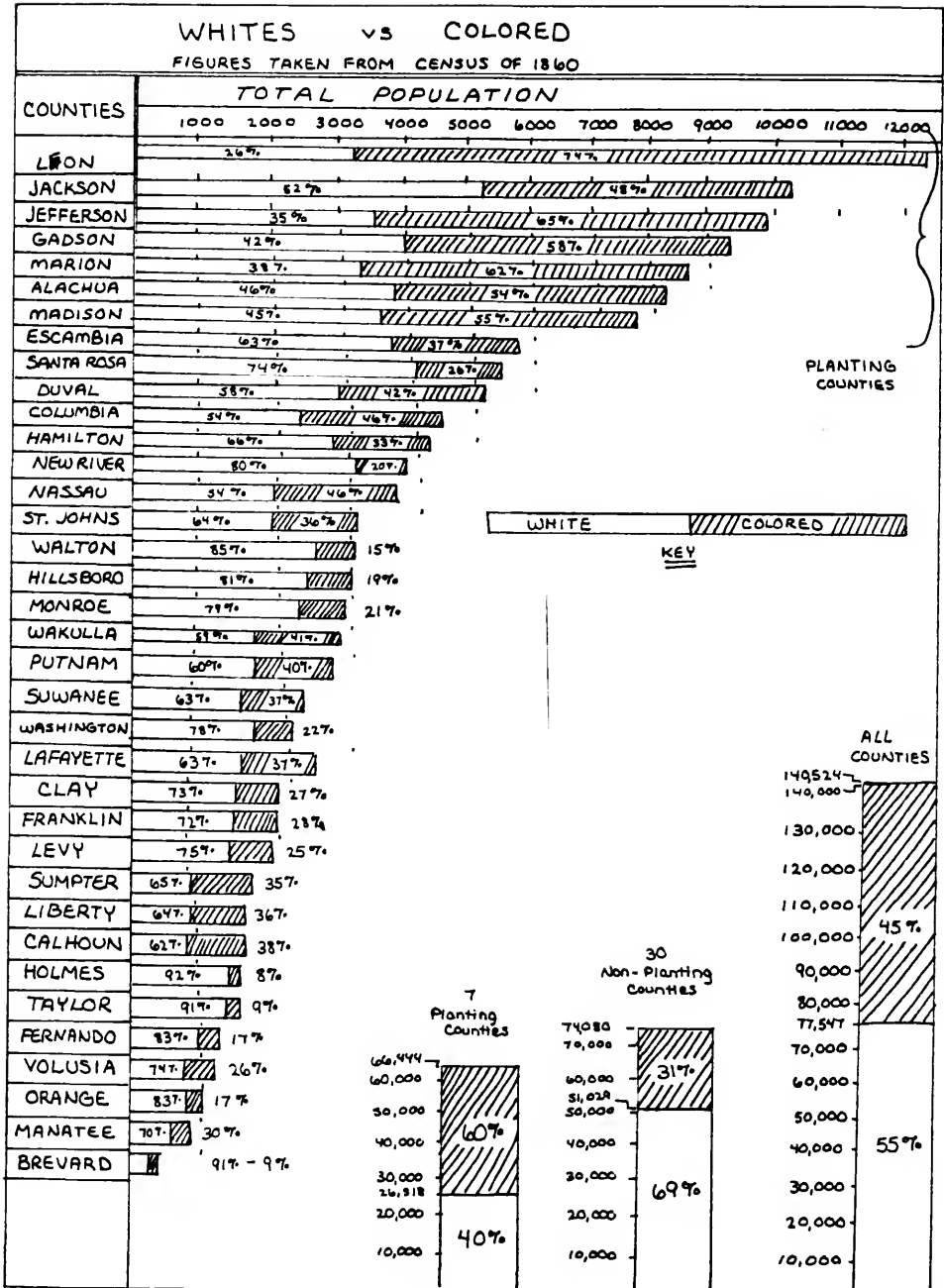


Figure 4-3. Whites vs. Colored. Source: Meredith, p. 8.

states, the slaves were mostly farm laborers and domestic servants, and the free negroes mostly skilled laborers, who found their best opportunities in towns and cities."¹³

The most exportable wealth of the nation came from cotton fields, turpentine orchards, and lumber camps. As William Watson Davis described the economy:

Almost everything consumed except vegetables, forage, and corn meal was imported. The planter bought his goods from the jobber merchant in the towns. The jobber purchased them generally in the Northern or Western states. Even salt meat came to many plantations of Florida from the west via New Orleans. Mules and horses in large numbers came from Tennessee and Kentucky.¹⁴

Although ranked seventh nationally in area, of the 59,268 square miles of territory the state encompassed, less than 2 percent was cultivated. In 1860, the average farm in Florida was worth \$3,485, of which \$2,502 represented land and buildings, \$137 implements and machinery, and \$846 live stock.¹⁵ Compared to the other ten southern states that would make up the Confederacy, Florida's annual agricultural output was humble. Among the Confederate states, Florida ranked last in the production of wheat, rye, Indian corn, oats, Irish potatoes, wool, peas, and beans. Florida's production of tobacco ranked sixth among southern states, her sweet potatoes eighth, and ginned cotton ninth. The only food products where Florida ranked near the top in production among southern states were cane sugar and cane molasses where the state ranked second to Louisiana.¹⁶ With 284,736 head of cattle, 13,421 horses, and a total value of livestock of

\$5,480,789, Florida was the lowest ranked state in the Confederacy in all three categories.¹⁷

The census of 1860 showed Florida had a total of 185 manufacturing establishments, employing 2,454 workers, and representing an investment of \$1,874,125. As William Watson Davis pointed out, \$886,000 of this amount was invested in Santa Rosa County, primarily in sawmills.¹⁸ In fact eighty-nine of the 185 manufacturing establishments in Florida were lumber mills that employed 1,227 of the 2,454 workers engaged in manufacturing, and produced \$1,484,145 of the total value of goods manufactured, \$2,447,969. This total was lower than that of any other state.¹⁹ Caution should be taken, however, in using these figures as fifteen of the state's thirty-seven counties made no returns. The major development in manufacturing industry in Florida, and particularly in East Florida, between the years of 1850 and 1860 was in the production of lumber. West Florida, led by Santa Rosa County, already had a long history of involvement in the lumber industry. By 1855, Pensacola was shipping some 18,000,000 board feet of lumber a year, and the industry was growing steadily with the establishment of many steam sawmills.²⁰ Starting about 1850 with the establishment of a number of sawmills in East Florida, that section entered heavily into the lumber trade. By 1853, some fourteen sawmills were operating in or around Jacksonville with more near Fernandina. Some 300 vessels a year were reported to be

engaged in the lumber trade in Jacksonvilles.²¹ By 1860, the saw mills in northeast Florida were exporting over \$2,000,000 worth of lumber annually.²² This industry's growth was fostered by the construction of railroads built to service the plantation areas of Middle Florida but which also opened the great pine forests of the area to turpentine makers. By 1860, a number of large turpentine plantations had been opened up along the right of way of the Florida railroad by turpentine workers from North Carolina who found more productive areas in North Florida than in their native state.²³

Other types of manufacturing enterprises listed in the 1860 Census were blacksmith shops, turpentine stills, grist mills, cotton gins and presses, a cotton mill, establishments for the manufacture of farming implements, boots, and shoes, brickyards, founderies, and saddle and harness shops.²⁴ In comparison, to the less than \$2,000,000 valuation of the state's manufacturing establishments, the state's farms were valued at \$16,435,727. This highlights the fact that in 1861, Florida was primarily an agricultural state. What industries Florida had were either extractive or those types that were the natural auxiliaries of an agricultural economy. Like that of other southern states, Florida had an unbalanced economy which forced the people to import almost all manufactured goods and, because of the great emphasis on production of plantation staples, even some of its

foodstuffs. This heavy reliance on imports would make the Peninsula State particularly vulnerable to anything that interfered with those imports such as a blockade.

Florida's wealth was primarily agricultural, and it was concentrated in the seven plantation counties in Middle Florida. Real and personal property in that area was valued at \$45,267,472, well over 50 percent of the aggregate value of all the real and personal property in the state.²⁵ Thus, in addition to the political and social leadership of the state, that area also had the economic leadership. This was evidenced by the pattern of construction of the railroads in antebellum Florida which traversed the plantation area. The first railroad built was the Tallahassee Railroad, chartered in 1834 and put in operation by 1836, designed to haul cotton from Tallahassee to St. Marks on the Gulf. Some twenty-one miles long, It helped make St. Marks the largest shipping point for cotton grown in territorial Florida.²⁶ The Pensacola and Georgia, built between 1855 and 1860, went from Tallahassee eastward across the Suwannee River and connected with the Florida Central at Lake City (Alligator). The Florida Central had its eastern terminus at the port city of Jacksonville. The Florida Railroad, with one terminus on the Atlantic coast at the port of Fernandina crossed the Florida Central at Baldwin and continued down across Alachua County terminating on the Gulf at Cedar Key (Figure 4-4.)²⁷ The promoters of these early railroads were, in general,

slaveholders and planters and the railroads constructed were built primarily to serve their economic interests. The railroads, therefore, connected most of the ports through which the majority of exports and imports passed, Fernandina and Jacksonville on the Atlantic, and St. Marks, and Apalachicola on the Gulf. While Pensacola was not connected with the rest of Florida, it was connected by railroad northward to Alabama. Of significance, in the early railroad construction, was the idea of a railroad from an Atlantic port across the peninsula to a Gulf port where shipping connections would shorten the time and distance between New York and Gulf port cities like New Orleans and Mobile. Thinking on a larger scale, George Rainafor Fairbanks envisioned the Atlantic to Gulf railroad as part of a larger plan to cut 1,700 miles off of the distance between New York and San Francisco when tied together with a railroad across the isthmus of Tehauntepec. This idea, which theoretically would give Florida connections to the Pacific and thence international trade, was pushed by railroad promoter David Levy Yulee as the great objective of his road across Florida.²⁸

A development in railroad building that would come back to haunt Florida and the Confederacy was the matter of rail connections with other states. At a railroad convention held in 1853 to discuss a railroad system for Florida, delegates from Middle Florida presented a plan that

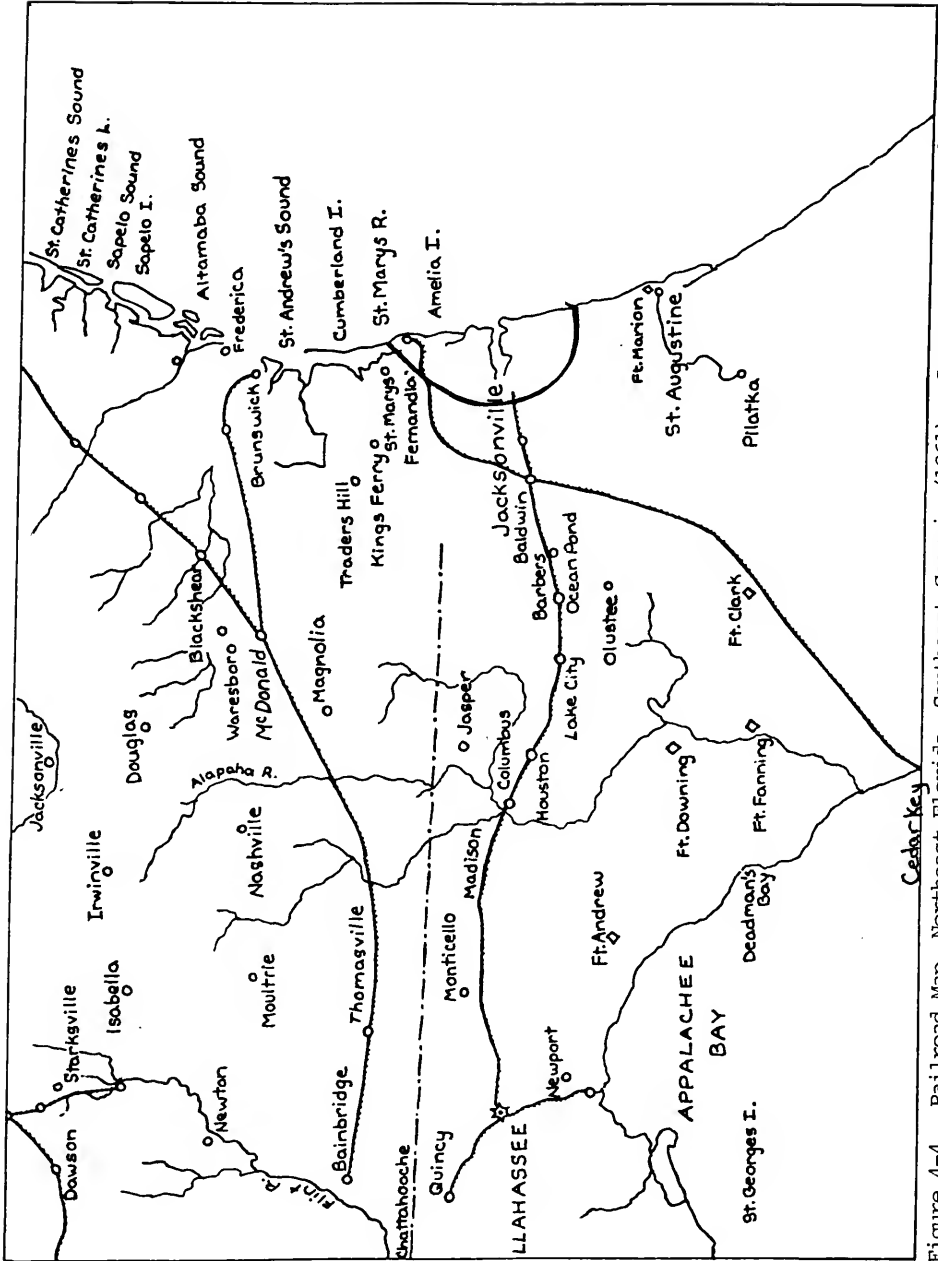


Figure 4-4. Railroad Map, Northeast Florida, Southeast Georgia (1861). Source: McKee, p. 155.

would see a rail line running from Savannah through Hamilton County and Monticello in Jefferson County into Middle Florida. This was bitterly objected to by the delegates from East Florida who saw this as an attempt to siphon the trade of Middle Florida out through Georgia to the detriment of Fernandina and Jacksonville.²⁹ In 1855, the General Assembly enacted into law a bill entitled "An Act to Provide For and Encourage a Liberal System of Internal Transportation in this State."³⁰ Among various provisions regarding financing and control, the Act contained a restriction on railroad connections with the northern boundary of the state until such time as the railroad system of the state should be extended from the junction with the Florida Railroad at Baldwin westward to the Suwannee. Although this restriction regarding construction of branch lines to the northern part of the state was later modified, the general policy was to build railroads to develop the state and carry trade to Florida's towns and ports rather than to those of other states. No connection was to be built that would carry Florida trade to a center outside the state; railroads from other states would only be permitted to enter Florida west of the Chattahoochie where little trade originated and where the prospect was that trade would be brought into the state rather than taken out.³¹

On the eve of the Civil War, Florida had a total of 401.5 miles of completed railroads. The only railroad

running to the northern boundary of the state was the Alabama and Florida Railroad which ran from Pensacola to Pollard, Alabama, on the border between the two states. The northern part of Middle and East Florida had railroad lines linking together most of its major towns and giving the interior access to the seaports. The Florida Railroad ran from Fernandina to Cedar Key by way of Baldwin, Starke, Waldo, Gainesville, Archer, and Bronson. Jacksonville was connected to Tallahassee by the linking of two railroads; the Florida, Atlantic and Gulf Central ran from Jacksonville to Lake City (Alligator) where it joined the Pensacola and Georgia line that continued on to Tallahassee. East and Middle Florida were tied together by this line which connected Monticello, Madison, and Baldwin. Although not very large, Baldwin would assume a strategic value out of proportion to its size because of its location as the point where the two major railroads that traversed Middle and East Florida crossed (Fig. 4-4.) Parts of the rail system authorized but uncompleted when Florida seceded were the section from Tallahassee westward to Pensacola and a trunk line from Waldo to Tampa. Some fifty miles of the latter, however, had been graded.³²

Another major mode of transportation and communication for Florida's antebellum economy took advantage of the state's navigable inland waterways. The St. Johns, the Oklawaha, the Indian River (more an inland waterway), the

Kissimee River, Lake Okeechobee, the Caloosahatchee, the Suwannee, the Apalachicola, and the Choctawhatchee were prime arteries to the interior. Before the Civil War, steamboats carried on trade regularly on the St. Johns, Suwannee, Choctawhatchee, and Oklawaha.³³ The most important of the inland water routes was the St. Johns where the towns of Jacksonville, Enterprise, Palatka, and Picolata were regularly serviced by steamboats originating from such southern ports as Brunswick, Savannah, or Charleston. The Apalachicola River in West Florida was a major artery for steamboats from the Gulf to the interior of Georgia via the Chattahoochee and Flint rivers and a major factor in the commercial development of that portion of Florida, Alabama, and Georgia. The combination of railroads leading from the interior to the seaports and the steamboats plying their trade on the inland waterways connecting the interior to the seaports contributed to the importance of a relatively few seaports to the Florida economy. Denied the use of such seaports as Pensacola, St. Marks, Apalachicola, and Cedar Key on the Gulf and Fernandina and Jacksonville on the Atlantic coast, the Florida economy could be severely crippled.

Florida's economy on the eve of secession from the Union was typically that of a far-southern slaveholding commonwealth. Its major exportable goods were cotton, turpentine, and lumber. Its transportation facilities were geared towards servicing an internal agricultural economy

and, while Florida possessed an extremely long coastline, most commercial activity converged on a relatively few good, well developed seaports. Factories were few and small and technical skills rare. Strong reliance for manufactured products was placed on imports with little competition from home based industries. The state's population was spread mainly in a band across the top of the state with a few isolated settlements outside of that band. The seven planting counties of Middle Florida were a locus for the state's agricultural wealth, slave population, and plantation system. Transportation and communication with the interior was by a railroad system constructed to serve the planting counties and by a system of natural waterways that penetrated the state. The terminal points of the railroads and the access points from the Atlantic and Gulf to the inland waterways gave importance to a relatively few seaports on an extended coastline. Outside of those railroads and inland waterways, the communication and transportation system in Florida was relatively primitive with limited access to large areas of the state. Florida had little economically, outside of its limited manpower, to contribute to a common cause at the outset of the Civil War. As other sources of supply for the Confederacy dried up or were blocked off by the Union in the latter stages of the conflict, Florida would gain, however, an economic significance that she did not have initially.

Notes

- ¹ Eighth Census of the United States, Population Schedules (1860). Microfilm in P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville.
- ² Horace Gibbs Davis, "Florida Journalism During the Civil War" (Master's Thesis, University of Florida, 1962), p. 65.
- ³ Eighth Census . . . Population Schedules, pp. 50-51.
- ⁴ ORA, III:4, p. 1269.
- ⁵ Eighth Census . . . Population Schedules, pp. 50-53.
- ⁶ William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 219.
- ⁷ Meredith, "The Secession Movement In Florida," p. 8.
- ⁸ Roland M. Harper, "Ante-Bellum Census Enumeration in Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly 6 (July, 1927): 51-52.
- ⁹ Eighth Census . . . Population Schedules, pp. 50-53.
- ¹⁰ Meredith, "The Secession Movement In Florida," pp. 5,8.
- ¹¹ William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 32.
- ¹² Harper, "Ante-Bellum Census", 50.
- ¹³ Ibid., 52.
- ¹⁴ William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 33.
- ¹⁵ Harper, "Ante-Bellum Census," 52.
- ¹⁶ Eighth Census of the United States: 1860, 4 vols. (Washington: 1866), pp. 200-208.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., p. 121.
- ¹⁸ William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 33.
- ¹⁹ Edwin L. Williams, Jr., "Florida in the Union, 1845-1861" (Ph.D. diss. University of North Carolina, 1951), p. 312.
- ²⁰ Philip Noyes Yonge, "The Lumber Industry of West Florida" Makers of America, I, 71-73, cited in Edwin L. Williams, "Florida in the Union," p. 305.

²¹Florida Republican [Jacksonville], June 25, 1853, cited by Edwin L. Williams, "Florida in the Union," p. 306.

²²Florida Home Companion [Ocala] June 5, 1860, cited by Edwin L. Williams, "Florida in the Union," p. 307.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Eighth Census, p. 60.

²⁵ Edwin L. Williams, "Florida in the Union," p. 112.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 110.

²⁷ James Harvey Mckee, Back In War Times: A History of the 144th Regiment New York Volunteer Infantry (New York: Lieut. Horace E. Bailey, 1903), p. 155.

²⁸ Edwin L. Williams, "Florida in the Union," p. 267.

²⁹ "Address to the People of Southern and Western States," DeBow's Review I (1851), Appendix 177, cited by Edwin L. Williams, "Florida in the Union", p. 267.

³⁰ Florida Acts (1855), pp.26-27.

³¹ Edwin L. Williams, "Florida in the Union," p. 273.

³² Ibid., p. 291.

³³ Ibid., p. 260.

CHAPTER V
FLORIDA IN THE CONFEDERACY--MILITARILY, THE EARLY YEARS

On January 10, 1861, the day Florida adopted its ordinance of secession, United States troops were transferred from Barrancas Barracks to Fort Pickens in Pensacola Harbor. There was good reason for the Union to take this precaution. A number of Florida's more ambitious citizens, aided and abetted by such people as the state's United States congressmen and the governor, had not waited for such formalities as the secession convention had followed. On January 5, one of Florida's Senators, David Levy Yulee sent a message to "Joseph Finegan or Colonel George W. Call" in Tallahassee which started out "The immediately important thing to be done is the occupation of the forts and arsenals in Florida."¹ He went on to indicate that the naval station and forts at Pensacola had first priority and that it was important to take them before the Federal government could reinforce them. He also suggested that the arsenal at Chattahoochee be guarded to prevent the weapons being removed. Looking at the larger scene, he continued:

What is advisable is the earliest possible organization of a Southern Confederacy and of a Southern Army. The North is rapidly consolidating against us upon the plan of force. A strong government, as eight states will make, promptly organized and a strong army, with Jeff Davis for

General-in-Chief, will bring them to a reasonable sense of the gravity of the crisis.

Have a Southern Government as soon as possible, adopting the present Federal Constitution for the time and a Southern Army. I repeat this because it is the important policy.²

Senator Yulee had hit upon a great truth that, in hindsight, has become of paramount importance. It would take over a year before the Confederacy could move through the various stages of a provisional government to a more formal one. During this progression, a great deal of misdirection, confusion, duplication of effort, critical omissions, and wastage of scarce resources took place. This "national" situation was repeated on a lower level within the various states that made up the emerging Confederacy and Florida was no exception. The early burst of patriotic enthusiasm that had led to secession eroded among the harsh realities of mobilization for a war that no one had adequately planned or prepared for; one which was to be vastly different and conducted on a much larger scale than had ever been experienced by the participants. The first year under the provisional government was a critical one in deciding the direction of the war. For Florida, it was to be one of great frustration and disappointment. In a hurry to be one of the first to secede, she found herself as one of the first abandoned by the Confederacy. With little to offer, requiring much, and highly vulnerable, Florida was a liability to both herself and the Confederacy.

Senator Yulee closed his January 5 message to Tallahassee with the admonition, "Lose no time about the navy-yard and forts at Pensacola."³ His suggestion to seize Federal installations prior to Florida's secession was not the first act Yulee had performed that might be considered highly questionable by the Federal government. He had previously requested from the secretary of war a list of United States Army officers appointed from Florida (Dec. 21, 1860) and in conjunction with Senator Stephen R. Mallory had asked for a detailed listing of the numerical strength of troops garrisoning Federal posts in Florida to include their arms and ammunition (December 28, 1860.)⁴ Yulee and Mallory again requested the information on the Federal installations on January 7 and finally received a reply from the Federal secretary of war on January 9 denying them the requested information.⁵

On the same day that Senator Yulee had written Finegan and Call to induce them to initiate action to seize the Pensacola installations, Governor Perry had sent a letter to a Colonel Duryea [or Dunn] authorizing him to raise a company and:

Proceed to the Apalachicola River and seize and possess the arsenal, arms, ammunition, stores, buildings, and other property now in the possession of the General Government, and retain the same subject to my orders. You are requested to act with secrecy and discretion. You are further authorized to call out the Seventh Regiment Florida Militia for all aid in its power to render that you deem necessary to retain occupation of said arsenal.⁶

The arsenal was seized the morning of January 6 with a loss to the Federal government of one six-pounder gun, fifty-seven flintlock muskets, 173,476 rounds of musket cartridges, and 5,122 pounds of gun powder.⁷ A desperate ordnance sergeant telegraphed his superior in Washington reporting this seizure and requested instructions.⁸ His message was followed by one from the ordnance sergeant in charge of Fort Marion at St. Augustine on January 7, reporting its seizure "by the order of the governor of the State of Florida."⁹ Fort Clinch, unoccupied and unfinished, defending (on paper) Fernandina was taken by state troops a few days after Fort Marion was seized.

As early as November 1860, while travelling through Florida, United States Army Captain M. C. Meigs concluded from his observations of the people and their feelings that there would be attempts on Federal installations in the state and he so warned General Scott.¹⁰ The Federal commander of the garrison at Key West had echoed this warning, but he received no instructions.¹¹ While, in fact, orders had been issued by the national government on January 4 detailing reinforcements for both the Key West and Pensacola areas, they would be either too late to be effective or not received in time to prevent takeovers by state troops of some of the Federal installations.¹² On January 12, state troops seized Barrancas Barracks, Forts Barrancas and McRee, and the Navy Yard at Pensacola. On

January 14, upon hearing of the adoption of the ordinance of secession, Federal Captain John M. Brannan at Key West moved his force of forty-four men from their barracks into the interior of Fort Taylor. He acted without instructions from Washington anticipating the orders that, unknown to him, had already been issued but would not get to Key West until almost two weeks after he had acted.¹³

Lieutenant Adam Slemmer, who commanded the Fort Barrancas garrison now withdrawn into Fort Pickens at Pensacola, found himself isolated and beseiged, awaiting instructions, supplies, and reinforcements much like Major Anderson was doing at Fort Sumter in South Carolina. With a garrison of eighty-one men, Slemmer was in command of a dilapidated fort originally built for 1,260 that had been abandoned and allowed to deteriorate. Prior to moving to the fort, Slemmer had hastily had the guns at Barrancas bearing on Fort Pickens spiked while Lieutenant Henry Erban of the store-ship Supply managed to do the same to the guns at Fort McRee.¹⁴ Both Slemmer and Erban had made attempts to get cooperation from Commodore James Armstrong in charge of the Navy Yard to keep Federal property from falling into the hands of the rebels without success. While Lieutenant Slemmer worked feverishly to upgrade the defenses at Fort Pickens, troops from Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia started to pour into Pensacola as early as January 11 to augment the local militia. On January 12 the Navy Yard at

Pensacola was surrendered by Commodore Armstrong and the Federal government had:

Lost its most important naval base on the Gulf, a "million-dollar" dry-dock, extensive and valuable marine work-shops, warehouses, barracks, a well-equipped "marine hospital", two powerful forts, 175 cannon, more than 12,000 projectiles, and ordnance stores at the navy yard variously estimated in value from \$117,000 to \$500,000.¹⁵

On the night of January 12 a group of four, representing themselves as commissioners of Florida and Georgia, demanded surrender of Fort Pickens. It was refused by Lieutenant Slemmer. Demands for surrender were repeated on January 15 and 18 and were also refused. Meanwhile, the defenders continued their efforts at trying to rehabilitate the old fort.¹⁶

The stand-off between the two sides continued. At a meeting between President Buchanan and a delegation of southern senators in Washington, the Southerners were assured by the president that an attack on either of the two currently beseiged Federal forts, Pickens or Sumter, before Lincoln's inauguration would only play into the hands of the Republicans. The Federal secretary of the navy, thereupon, sent a message to Lieutenant Slemmer at Fort Pickens instructing him not to allow Federal vessels to land at Pensacola. The trade-off was telegraphed instructions from the southern senators to the commander of the forces beseiging Fort Pickens to prevent an assault on that fort.¹⁷ While the Federal forces at Key West prepared for an attack

that would never come, and the Federal forces at Pensacola prepared for an attack that appeared imminent from the size of the forces arriving and being trained, Florida turned her attention to preparing itself for war.

Since Governor Perry had requested appropriations for a military fund and authorization from the legislature to reorganize the state military organization, progress had been uneven. A number of local militia companies had come into existence in the closing months of 1860, but they were poorly armed at best and probably had more effect on the development of a militant political attitude than they did on the organization of an effective militia.¹⁸ The money requested was appropriated, but no militia reorganization law was enacted. By the close of 1860, Florida was no more ready for war than most states, North or South. The first troops to be raised were organized and equipped through private means.¹⁹ A number of irregular groups of "vigilants," "regulators," and "Minute Men" had been formed which in most cases had no legal basis and were poorly trained and armed. The governor accepted their offers of service "with alacrity" into the state militia.²⁰ Governor Perry appealed to the General Assembly in early February 1861, for legislation to enable the increase and more effective organization of the state militia. The General Assembly responded on February 14 with a law that created Florida's Civil War Militia. The state adjutant general was authorized to distribute blank rolls to

every captain or lieutenant then holding a commission from the state, and these blanks were to be used to enroll men for six months service with the forces of the state. The adjutant general was then authorized to divide the men into companies, regiments, and brigades according to geographic area. Companies were to have a minimum size of sixty-four, maximum of 100 men. Provision was made for election of officers and for establishment of such non-combatant military elements as surgeons and chaplains. The governor was authorized to raise immediately two infantry and one cavalry regiments.²¹

Recruitment for the state militia became increasingly difficult as the year 1861 progressed. On March 1, the Confederate Army was formally organized and the secretary of war informed the various state governors that the Confederate War Department was henceforth authorized to shape the course of military organization in the states. Further, by the act of February 28, the president was authorized to receive twelve-month volunteers, and he assumed command of all military in matters "concerning outside powers."²² On March 9 the first requisition for troops was levied by the Confederate government with Florida to provide 500 troops.²³ Concurrent recruitment for both state militia and Confederate army forces was fully underway by mid-March 1861. Recruitment was locally based, and men began to assemble at Tallahassee, Apalachicola, Gainesville, Quincy, Marianna,

Monticello, Pensacola, Chattahoochee, Fernandina, Jacksonville, and other designated locations.²⁴ Despite the hurry and confusion of a short-notice mobilization, units began to take form and soon a regiment of West Florida volunteers known as the 1st Florida Infantry came into being. The regiment was mustered into the Confederate Army on April 5, and arrived at Pensacola on April 12. Four days before their arrival, the Confederate government put out a second call for volunteers and assigned Florida a quota of 1,500.²⁵ The following day, this levy was amended in the case of Florida to say that the war department "wishes the whole force to be infantry, unless Your Excellency should be able to furnish two companies of artillery."²⁶ This would appear to be the first time specific types of military units were requested. In the absence of any particular guidelines, units were coming into existence based upon what the individual members felt they would like to be rather than what was needed or could be armed and equipped. This was true on local, state, and national levels. As was to be expected, the most glamorous arm was cavalry, and anyone who could avail himself of a horse saw himself as a cavalier. On April 16, 2,000 more men were requisitioned from Florida.²⁷ Apparently not having received this latest levy, Governor Perry responded to the secretary of war on April 19 with a little concern about the number of troops required for Confederate Army service:

I am engaged in raising the 1,500 troops called for, and will hurry them up. Will 500 additional troops be called for from the State? Our effective forces does not exceed 13,000.²⁸

The secretary of war wrote back on the same day informing Governor Perry that he had called for 2,000 additional troops, but added, "If you cannot raise them expeditiously let me know, and I will revoke the requisition and make it elsewhere."²⁹ The following day, Governor Perry replied shortly that "I will raise 2,000 troops as soon as possible."³⁰ On May 13, Governor Perry informed the secretary that the troops were almost ready, but that he could only supply them with 1,000 muskets. After requesting arms for the rest, the governor asked, "Can I concentrate troops at certain defenseless points on coast? Will you send officers to drill and instruct?"³¹ Having received no answer by May 17 the governor again requested information as to when and where the troops were wanted.³² On May 18 Governor Perry informed the secretary that:

The regiment awaits your orders; two others ready, save arms and equipments. Can you supply? Several companies are encamped at expense of officers. Say where wanted and when.³³

The secretary of war informed Governor Perry on May 23 that the armed and equipped regiment was accepted, but the Confederacy could not accept another regiment unless it was armed. The accepted regiment was detailed for duty in Florida.³⁴ On the twentieth, Governor Perry complained to J. Morton, Owens, and Ward, Florida's representatives in the

Provisional government, that he had raised 2,000 troops as requested but since they were not accepted, he was in a quandry as to what to do with them.³⁵ On May 29, Governor Perry informed the secretary that "I have two regiments organized for the defense of the State and one for Virginia. Please answer."³⁶ Finally, on June 1st, the now desperate governor wired the Confederate secretary of war:

I have been telegraphing you since the 13th ultimo relative to the two thousand troops raised under your requisition. We have batteries erected at several points on the coast, requiring at least two regiments to garrison. If Florida is to take care of herself, say so.³⁷

Nevertheless, requisitions on Florida for 1,000 men for the Confederate "Reserve Corps" were sent out on June 30.³⁸ This last requisition was still not filled six months later. During 1861 the Confederate war department levied Florida for 5,000 troops. The total number that entered either the state or Confederate military service that year was 6,772, organized into four infantry regiments, one cavalry regiment, nine unattached infantry companies, four artillery, and three cavalry companies. Individually, there were 5,491 infantry, 1,150 cavalry, and 331 artillery.³⁹ The state militia numbered less than 1,000 men and included most of the unattached companies. In the governor's message to the Florida House of Representatives November 27, 1861, The governor summarized his problems in relation to the State Militia. He called attention to the imperfect military organization of the state and stated that a militia system

cannot co-exist with a voluntary system.⁴⁰ Further, the official returns from recent elections for military officers revealed the following:

We don't have a complete militia regiment or scarcely a complete militia company in the State. . . . The manner in which volunteer companies have been raised has subverted militia organizations. . . . The number of fighting men has not increased but the number of officers has doubled. . . . Hence is seen occasionally a considerable display of swords and buttons and but few muskets and bayonets.⁴¹

Service in the Confederate army was preferable to that of the militia because of the lure of service for short periods with pay. Cavalry was the most popular branch of service, and when Governor Milton took office, he found himself with many more prospective cavalrymen than he thought necessary. "Almost every man that has a pony wishes to mount him at the expense of the Confederate government."⁴² Milton protested the authority given by the war department to W. G. M. Davis to raise a cavalry regiment which Milton felt was useless in Florida and an unnecessary expense to the state. He went on to state that, independent of Davis's regiment, he had turned down requests for "ten associations for cavalry companies within the last two days."⁴³ Milton summed up his argument:

The unnecessary expense for cavalry would supply the means for the proper coast defenses; would enable me to equip companies of light artillery and infantry, which equipments might be preserved to protect the peace which we hope to obtain in the present war. But the hundreds of horses which are now being withdrawn from agricultural industry will be of little avail in war and leave the State without the means of agriculture which will be difficult to supply.⁴⁴

The 1st and 2nd Florida Regiments had been raised to fill the quota assigned the state under the first call of President Davis. The 3rd and 4th Regiments were formed in a response to a call for two additional regiments to defend the coast of Florida.⁴⁵ The problems Governor Milton had with the 3rd, 4th, and what was originally intended to be the 5th Florida Regiment, are indicative of problems many southern governors were having in raising troops, supporting them, and then having conflicts with the central government over their use. The 3rd Regiment, Colonel W. S. Dilworth commanding, was headquartered at Fernandina with companies spread, at times, as far away as New Smyrna. The 4th Regiment was raised by Governor Perry for Confederate service with the hope that his friend D. P. Holland would be elected its colonel. Unfortunately for Governor Perry's plans, Edward Hopkins was elected instead so before leaving office, Perry appointed Holland in charge of an artillery battalion at Fernandina expecting that this might evolve into the 5th Florida Regiment.⁴⁶ The officer commanding at Fernandina, Colonel W. S. Dilworth, needing artillerymen, mustered this battalion into service against specific orders from the war department prohibiting acceptance of units lacking sufficient equipment. Colonel Dilworth further violated a Confederate prohibition against accepting units into Confederate service whose officers had not first been approved by the war department and properly commissioned.

Colonel Dilworth's command and the artillery battalion were the subject of a number of letters from both Governor Milton and Colonel Dilworth to President Davis and the secretary of war. Governor Milton, who did not like either Dilworth or Holland, alluded to the insobriety of all of the 3rd Regiment's field grade officers except one and the illegality of the artillery unit, while Dilworth claimed that politicians were interfering with the war effort and even threatened to take his units across the state line and enlist them into Georgia's military.⁴⁷ The problem was complicated by the absence of a Confederate commander in Florida. General John B. Grayson had been assigned to such position in late August 1861, but arrived in poor health and died shortly afterward. It would not be until late November that a Confederate officer would arrive to take charge. In the meantime, both Governor Milton and Colonel Dilworth felt that they had acceded to the position until such time as a replacement for General Grayson arrived. On October 22, the secretary of war attempted to solve the problem when he instructed Brigadier General James H. Trapier, who had been assigned as General Grayson's successor, to go first to Fernandina as "the point most important and most likely to attract the attention of the enemy"⁴⁸ The secretary continued:

You will find, as I am informed, that the troops have been mustered into the service of the Confederacy in such manner as to render their services almost valueless, either by reason of the incompetency and

inefficiency of their officers, or because mustered for cavalry or artillery where such arms are not required or cannot be procured, or for like reason. . . . I would suggest that on your application The Department would not hesitate to muster out of service all such organizations as would come within the class above described, and then muster the men afresh by companies, so as to leave it in our power to organize the regiments and appoint the field officers, instead of leaving them to be elected by the men.⁴⁹

General Trapier was delayed by the Union attack on Port Royal and did not get to Fernandina as early as originally planned. The secretary of war wrote Colonel Dilworth on October 26 that Holland's artillery battalion would not be accepted in its current state.⁵⁰ A letter from the secretary of war to Governor Milton on November 22 informed the governor that General Trapier was going directly to Fernandina and would bring matters into proper order.⁵¹ The letter contained more good news for the governor. The boundary between the military departments of Middle and East Florida was changed from the Chattahoochee River to the Choctawhatchee.⁵² The governor was much concerned about the middle Florida area and had been upset over the creation of a military department that did not include the entire area contiguous to the Chattahoochee River to include Apalachicola and Tallahassee. Governor Milton needed some good news because his letters to officials of the central government were beginning to reflect his growing frustration. In a November 19 letter to President Davis, Governor Milton wrote:

At all important points we are threatened with attack; nowhere prepared to meet the enemy; and when, as governor of the State, I have applied for arms and

munitions of war, I have been answered a requisition should be made by the officer in command of the military department, yet none is in command. [Trapier had not yet arrived] It would have been almost as reasonable under the circumstances to have referred me to the Emperor of China⁵³

Governor Milton went on to report that the citizens of Florida were beginning to despair of being protected by the Confederacy and were losing confidence in their governor. In desperation Governor Milton pleaded to be issued arms and ammunition, given control over all Confederate forces in the state not part of General Braxton Bragg's command at Pensacola, and allowed to defend Florida as commander-in-chief. In his closing remarks he stated, "It is highly important that some one should be in command having the experience and common sense necessary to avoid useless expenditures and to enforce discipline among the troops, and to make them available for the defense of the State."⁵⁴ The secretary of war replied on November 29th that the belated arrival of General Trapier has "doubtless put an end to the apprehensions you suggest."⁵⁵ He continued, "Your excellency [sic] may rest assured, and you may assure the patriotic people of your State, that you shall not be overlooked in the efforts for the common defense."⁵⁶ The secretary's assurance did not soothe the governor. In a scathing letter to President Davis written on December 9, Milton started out by citing the existance of a cavalry unit located where it was of no possible use [Tampa] and

subsisting off the state while doing nothing. He said it was just one of many examples and went on to state:

Every reflecting man in the country is becoming alarmed at the uncalled for waste of substance of the land at a time when it should be husbanded; and throughout the State the people are becoming indignant that such bodies of unarmed men and idle horses should be reared up among them, with no prospect but to consume the means of support for the women and children, cripple the usefulness of the armed troops for defense against the enemy, and bring ruin upon the people and disgrace upon the Confederate Government.⁵⁷

Governor Milton then moved to the heart of the problem which was the conflict between the authority of the state and that of the central government. He wrote, "The worst feature of Black Republicanism was that which threatened to ignore State boundaries and the rights of States as free, sovereign, and independent parties to the compact known as the Constitution of the United States of America."⁵⁸ He charged that the raising of troops by the war department "within the limits of a State in disregard of the constituted authorities of the State" was overriding "the constituted authority of the States and destroying the last vestige of human liberty."⁵⁹ He continued:

When we see a President making war without the assent of Congress; when we behold judges threatened because they maintain the writ of habeas corpus, so sacred to free men; when we see justice and law trampled under the armed heel of military authority, and upright men and innocent women dragged to distant dungeons upon the mere edict of a despot; when we find all of this tolerated and applauded by a people who had been in full enjoyment of freedom but a few months ago, we may be admonished that there may, in time, be danger to us, unless we meet with our opposition at the very threshold of every invasion of the rights of States, whether that invasion be intentional or not.⁶⁰

After June 30, 1861, recruitment, mobilization, and regimental organization became a matter for the central government. No more requisitions were sent to the governors by the war department. The states were divided into military districts, and the officers in charge of each district presented requisitions to the governor and received help from him in raising troops. In those states, like Florida, that had a state militia, recruitment for both state and Confederate forces from limited manpower resources worked to the disadvantage of both levels of government. The Confederacy's Conscription Act was passed in April 1862, which all but killed what state militias still existed. It was anticlimactic in Florida because, over the protests of Governor Milton, a special session of the Convention of the People of Florida, meeting in January 1862, abolished Florida's State Militia effective March 10, more than a month before the Confederate Conscription Act was passed. The Convention was motivated partially by confidence in the central government and partially by the attractive idea of having lower taxes if there was no necessity to support a militia.⁶¹

For Florida, the timing for the abolishment of the militia was particularly bad. Confederate setbacks in Tennessee called for a withdrawal of all available Confederate units from the deep South at the same time that the only other available troops left to defend Florida from

Federal invasion were eliminated. To forestall the complete collapse of state defenses, the Executive Council passed a short-lived resolution reorganizing the militia. Meeting serious objections to its resolution, the Executive Council repealed it, and from that time until the end of the war, the governor had to work within the framework of volunteer military organizations.

It was almost a year and half after Florida's secession before the single, homogeneous military system of the new central government brought some sort of limited order into what had been a haphazard, confusing, inefficient, and duplicative process of raising troops. Initially relying on volunteers and supplied by a wide range of sources from private contributions to government issue, troops were raised with little thought to the needs of the state or central government. Training and arming were a matter of location and good or bad fortune. By the end of 1861, a significant percentage of Florida's available military manpower and military resources was in the service of the central government and destined for employment in areas outside of the state. This situation would cause a continuing rift between the state and central government over the state's military status within the Confederacy and the nature of its contributions to the central government and the support to be received from that government.

As early as May 17, 1861, General Braxton Bragg, commanding the Confederate forces at Pensacola was being queried by the central government in relation to the numbers of troops he could spare for Virginia.⁶² While the 1st Florida Infantry was not among those recommended for transfer at that time by General Bragg, that unit would be departing the state within a year. This query to General Bragg was also an indication that the central government did not consider Florida to be high on their list of priorities. The first Florida unit actually to leave Florida was the 2nd Regiment of Florida Volunteers, some 927 strong, which departed from Baldwin for Richmond, Virginia, in mid-July 1861. The monthly strength report for the department of Middle and East Florida (which did not include the troops at Pensacola) for December 1861 reported an aggregate of 3,972 men actually present for duty.⁶³ Within the next year, this figure would drop by half to about 2,000 where it would hold for much of the rest of the war. By the end of the war, Florida would have contributed over 15,000 men to Confederate service, the bulk of which had left the state by the end of 1862.

Although limited in comparison with other southern states, the most important asset Florida had to offer the Confederacy initially was military manpower. The first year of the war in Florida saw a great deal of confusion and misdirection in mobilizing this resource. Starting with

secession there was a lack of strong leadership and direction from both the state and Provisional Confederate government over the numbers of troops to be raised, the types of units desired, their training, arming and equipping, selection of officers, staging, and type and location of employment. Granted that few could foresee the size and type of war this was to be, that the Provisional government had to start from zero in getting organized, and that the Federal government would be as determined as it was to put down the rebellion, the point is, like many other southern states, Florida wasted time, energy, and both financial and human resources at a very early stage of the war.

The cost of outfitting troops entering both the militia and Confederate service was a heavy drain on the state's resources. This situation was further complicated by the financial acts of the convention and the legislature which tended to contradict rather than support each other. In January 1861, the legislature had provided for the issue of \$5000,000 in treasury notes and \$500,000 in bonds.⁶⁴ The bond issue was countermanded by the convention which authorized the governor to borrow the \$500,000 and issue coupon bonds backed by the sale of public lands to exclude that set aside for education or internal improvement. Payment for these lands, however, was to be made only in gold, silver, or the paper of solvent banks, a "Catch 22" situation because little, if any, of these forms of currency

were in the hands of the people. The result was that no lands could be sold, the bonds could not be negotiated, and the treasury notes were the only resource of the state.⁶⁵

On August 31, The Provisional government passed an act reimbursing Florida for the money the state had spent in "arming, equipping, and maintaining troops for the service of the Confederate States of America" in view of the fact that Florida "has exhausted her treasury and has great need of money to carry on her military operations."⁶⁶ The money was to be issued to Florida in Confederate treasury notes provided that Florida deposited with the secretary of the treasury an equal sum in the bonds of Florida to be issued "under an ordinance of the convention of said State."⁶⁷ Both Confederate and state treasury notes depreciated rapidly towards practical worthlessness with the state notes holding a slight edge in the descent.

Even when money was available, arms were difficult to obtain. Procurement of military supplies was conducted in such cities as Charleston, Savannah, New Orleans, Mobile, and Columbus, Georgia.⁶⁸ After midsummer of 1861, arms became even more difficult to obtain and, as has been noted, the Richmond government refused to accept unarmed Florida troops into service.⁶⁹ Companies of partially armed troops were combined with others to form fully armed units.⁷⁰ The problem of supplying arms was never solved, and as late as May 1862, Brigadier General Joseph Finegan appealed directly

to the people of Florida for arms, preferably "shot guns, double and single barrel rifles, and muskets."⁷¹

All troops that left the state for Confederate service were armed, but those remaining were not as well off. Some arms were received in the state by blockade-runners which stood to make a lucrative profit. A blockade-runner, the Gordon, came into Mosquito Inlet with arms for the Confederacy and was the subject of an immediate dispatch from Governor Milton to the secretary of war on October 29, 1861:

Florida wants arms. She has never received a musket from the Confederate States. The Gordon brings sabers and pistols. Can I get some?⁷²

One arms-carrying blockade-runner that did not make it was the steamer Salvor owned by James McKay of Tampa. That ship ran aground and was captured in October 1861, with a cargo that consisted of 21,000 stand of rifles, 100 boxes of revolvers, six rifled cannon, and a large amount of ammunition.⁷³ When the steel-clad steamer Fingal ran the blockade into Savannah, President Davis immediately got messages from the governors of Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina requesting a part of the arms the ship had brought in.⁷⁴ Governor Pickens of South Carolina, in a June 30 report to the secretary of war claimed that 6,000 stand of arms had been sent to Florida.⁷⁵ There does not appear to be evidence in reports from Florida of the arrival of this many weapons from another state.

In early 1862, a cargo of arms and ammunition had been brought into Nassau aboard the steamer Galdiator, and its cargo subdivided onto two small fast steamers bound for Mosquito Inlet in Florida.⁷⁶ The 10,000 guns that came into New Smyrna destined for the chief of ordnance at Savannah were eagerly grabbed at by all of the weapon-hungry units in Florida that could get to them. Eventually, after all of the special agents dispatched were able to recover as many weapons as they could, Florida ended up some 1,289 weapons richer.⁷⁷ Some 552 of the weapons were seized by the 7th Florida Regiment, soon to leave for Confederate service.⁷⁸ A side effect of this fiasco was to point out how difficult it was to get goods that had run the blockade into Florida from point of arrival through the state to other parts of the Confederacy. These difficulties included both those of travel over relatively undeveloped facilities and security of the goods from theft. All of the Confederate states were short of armaments and any news of the arrival of arms travelled quickly. Each individual state was looking out for its own needs and competed with other states and the central government for available assets. Other types of military equipment, to include clothing, knapsacks, cartridge belts, canteens and such, were provided by the state or central government to a limited degree. Many Florida units were equipped with military accouterments purchased for local units in Florida by committees organized in towns and

villages. The results varied widely but were rarely completely satisfactory.

A thread that runs throughout a consideration of Florida's relationship to the Confederacy is the matter of command and control. Specifically, who has the authority; who is in charge. While this is touched on in a number of areas being discussed, for purposes of clarity, it would be well to summarize the situation that existed in Florida during the early years of the war. War is an extraordinary condition that calls for extraordinary measures. The seceded states found themselves embroiled in the unique situation of having to reorganize politically under a new central government while assuming new internal functions such as raising military forces, providing for external defense, controlling scarce resources, and financing all of these and any other war related measures. This was a very difficult period for Florida.

Normally, in war, the executive branch of government becomes more important than usual assuming increased powers in order to administer more effectively by making rapid decisions on a wide variety of problems that require immediate settlement. Such was not the case in Florida. Beginning with the December 1860 election of the delegates to the People's Convention and the adoption by that group of the resolution that claimed it had the power to speak for the people, authority within the state of Florida fragmented.

This extralegal group co-existed and competed with the duly constituted and elected officials of the government to include the governor and General Assembly. Complicating the situation was the presence of a conservative governor-elect, John Milton, who had been elected in November 1860, but who would not take office until October 1861, alongside the lame-duck, radical incumbent, Madison Starke Perry. When Governor Milton finally did take office, he found his task complicated by the presence of radical Democrats in both the legislature and the convention.⁷⁹ Additionally, in early 1862, the new governor found he had to contend with an executive council that was created by the convention for the purpose of "strengthening the executive department during the exigencies of the present war."⁸⁰ What this meant in reality was that the governor was supposed to share his police and war prosecution powers with the Council. While this Council was dissolved later in 1862 and did not create or perpetuate any policy of primary importance, it was a slap in the face of the state's chief executive and, along with the Convention, a usurpation of his authority.

Governor Milton's relations with the central government were no less complex. The first year of the war was conducted by a provisional government that had to organize itself while trying to determine priorities and policies. Militarily, it had to organize an armed force, train and equip it, and then employ it where it was most needed. This

took time. As we have seen, there was conflict in Florida because both the state and the Confederacy tried to raise troops from the same sources. In an attempt to resolve military conflicts within the state of Florida, the Confederacy created a military department embracing Middle and East Florida and, in late August 1861, assigned General John B. Grayson to its command. General Grayson's illness and subsequent death, the assignment of first General Edmund Kirby Smith, and then General James H. Trapier, delayed the arrival of a replacement for Grayson in Florida until late November 1861. In the absence of an authoritative military representative of the central government, it appeared that everyone from the governor on down attempted to fill the vacuum. The result was a great deal of confusion and misdirection.

The governor's main concern was the state and, in particular, the middle portion of the state where the major portion of the population (to include his political support) and resources were located. The central government, on the other hand, was more concerned about the national situation and, as it currently affected Florida, that portion of the state that formed part of the south Atlantic coast. To complete the picture, various citizen's groups and politicians were primarily concerned about their own locales. A major problem which neither the Confederacy nor the Union effectively realized and capitalized upon was, like Virginia

before the Civil War, because of its extended east-west geography, in strategic, political, economic, and social reality, Florida was more than one state. Parts of the State were more closely tied to portions of other states than to parts of their own state. This fact would provide constant internal and external dissension on matters of defensive priorities. Eventually, the abandonment of the coastal areas and the withdrawal of Confederate troops from the state, left the state to fend for itself.

The direction of the defense of the state, however, was not left to its chief executive. West Florida came under the influence of the Confederate forces at Mobile. Although the governor had recommended his own man to head the military department of East and Middle Florida, Joseph Finegan, a civilian politician from Fernandina, was appointed a brigadier general in the Confederate Army and assigned to that command by the secretary of war. General Finegan was a partner of former Senator David L. Yulee and had been recommended by Florida's delegation to the Provisional government. Although Governor Milton had requested several times to be designated as the commander-in-chief of Florida's forces and permitted to defend the state himself, such was not to be the case. The central government insisted on maintaining military command of the area but was unable to provide resources. The chief executive of the state was charged with providing resources but not allowed to determine

how those resources were to be used. The governor was principally concerned with the middle of the state; General Finegan was from Fernandina and concerned with matters there as well as the railroad he had helped build and that his partner David L. Yulee now controlled. It was a very frustrating administration for Governor Milton who sincerely desired to assist the Confederate government in its endeavors but found himself bypassed and undercut by that government. Concerned about his own state, he was continually hamstrung by competing authorities in his efforts to provide adequately for that state.

Florida, with over 6,000 miles of tidal shoreline, a vast land area, a small population, and a very limited industrial capacity was probably the most vulnerable of all the seceding states in January 1861. The peninsula could be penetrated in a number of places by water; her coastal terrain was hardly defensible, characterized by numerous islands, flat beaches, and sand dunes bordering inland waterways fed by immense swamps and lakes. Her population was largely concentrated in a northern belt across the state with only scattered settlements along her coast, and these mainly in the northern portion of the state.

The primary railroad system in the state, although limited in mileage, did service northeastern and middle Florida well but only went as far west as Tallahassee and did not connect with either the western part of the state or with

any other part of the Confederacy. President Davis was anxious to have the Pensacola and Georgia line extended from Tallahassee to the Chattahoochee River where transportation by water could reach Columbus, Georgia, and this line was extended as far as Quincy in 1862.⁸¹ Late in 1861, it had been proposed to extend the Pensacola and Georgia to the Georgia state line where it could connect with the Savannah, Albany, and Gulf Railroad, a project General Robert E. Lee thought of the highest priority.⁸² A petition for a government subsidy of \$80,000 by the Pensacola and Georgia to complete this project was refused. However, on February 10, 1862, the Confederate Congress appropriated \$1,000,000 to be used by the president to connect the Richmond and Danville and North Carolina roads, an indication, perhaps, of Florida's lower strategic priority.⁸³ In the governor's message of November 17, 1862, Milton had recommended completion of the Pensacola and Georgia to the Chattahoochee as a "military, political, and commercial necessity."⁸⁴ He believed this had priority over a suggestion that a connection be made at either Houston or Monticello with the Albany and Gulf Railroad that ran from Savannah to Thomasville and Bainbridge, Georgia, to the Chattahoochee, which amounted to building some twenty-two miles rather than the seventy miles the latter suggestion would require.⁸⁵ A committee recommended building a connector line from Lawton, Georgia, to Live Oak, Florida, rather than the proposed one

from Monticello.⁸⁶ Construction had started on this connector from both ends, and by the end of 1861, substantial progress had been made.⁸⁷ Although grading was completed on the Georgia side, rails were not laid until 1863. On the Florida side, twenty-one of the twenty-two miles had been graded and ties laid on eight of those miles, but rails for the entire route were lacking as well as the construction of a bridge over the Suwannee River.⁸⁸ A subsequent political and legal battle between the state and Confederate government over the conscription of rails from the Florida Railroad (involving a part owner, former Senator Yulee) prevented the completion of this connector line until March of 1865, too late to be of any use to the Confederacy.⁸⁹

In 1862, it took two and one half days to go from Waldo to Tallahassee, some 150 miles with one-night stops in Lake City and Madison. The Civil War found the railroad system in Florida uncompleted between Tallahassee and Pensacola and between Tampa and Waldo, although the latter had been graded. The one railroad in the extreme western portion of the state connected Pensacola with Alabama but with nothing to the east. Its rails would be later torn up and used by the Confederacy elsewhere. Militarily, the Florida railroad system provided the fastest means by which troops could be concentrated in the northern portion of middle and east Florida and between the Atlantic and the Gulf coasts in that region. The system could also assist, with some difficulty

because of the lack of connections with railroad systems of contiguous states, in the movement of subsistence supplies or materials that had run the blockade to the remainder of the Confederacy. Of particular military importance would be the town of Baldwin where the railroad that went from the Atlantic to the Gulf crossed the line that went from Jacksonville to Tallahassee. Additionally, any of the towns along the railroad lines that would serve as collection points for men and materials would take on an importance out of proportion to their size.

Florida's extended coastline and proximity to Cuba and the Bahamas seemed ideal for blockade running, but her limited internal transportation system converged on only a few major seaports and was primitive in most of the rest of the state. The contraband that could be brought in would have difficulty getting to where it was needed, either within the state or within the Confederacy. For example, one of the routes taken by supplies brought in by blockade runners to Mosquito Inlet had the supplies hauled by wagon over rough terrain to the St. Johns River, transported by small steamer up the Ocklawaha to Fort Brooks, carried by wagon from there to Waldo, from Waldo by railroad to Baldwin, and finally, by wagon again between the Florida railroad system at Madison to Quitman on Georgia's railroad system, more than twenty miles apart. A month might be consumed in just transiting Florida.

The Federal forts located in Florida had been designed to provide security against seizure of harbors that could be used as bases by enemy naval forces. The most strategic area in Florida, the Keys, commanded the entrance to the Gulf. The Federal government occupied the forts that controlled the Keys during the entire war. Pensacola was probably the second most strategic point in Florida because of its excellent anchorage, navy yard, and rail connections with Alabama cities. There were no other significant fortifications on the Gulf coast, but on the northern Florida Atlantic coast were two permanent forts. Fort Marion at St. Augustine was complete and had guns; Fort Clinch at Fernandina was unfinished and had only a few unmounted cannons; both were maintained by military storekeepers. Within the state, the city of Tallahassee was important militarily because of its status as a capital and its closeness to the Chattahoochee arsenal. The town of Baldwin, despite its lack of size, was important because it was the junction of two railroads. Other places of some military importance because of their status as sea ports, railroad terminals, access points to inland waterways, or a combination of some or all of these factors, were Jacksonville, Fernandina, St. Augustine, Cedar Key, New Smyrna, Apalachicola, St. Marks, and Tampa.

When the secession convention met in January 1861 in Tallahassee, it appointed two powerful seven-member

committees to consider the state defenses: the committee on militia and internal police and the committee on sea coast defenses. The chairman of the committee on sea coast defenses, Joseph Finegan, reported that the committee believed that while the Union would be able to blockade the major sea ports of the Confederacy, there was virtually no chance of an attack against any Florida seaport. Nevertheless, they recommended that field batteries be placed to defend the more obviously vulnerable inlets and anchorages and the responsibility for the planning and organization of local defenses be left to local militia officers.⁹⁰ The convention evidently approved the committee's report, but it was not until April 22, 1861, that the governor was empowered to use militia in defense of critical seacoast points within the state and a council was authorized to help him in carrying out his emergency duties.⁹¹

A further convention resolution gave the state paper jurisdiction over all former Federal installations within Florida.⁹² It was under this authority that the state troops seized Fort Clinch at Fernandina, Fort Marion at St. Augustine, the Chattahoochee arsenal, and all of the Federal military installations at Pensacola except for Fort Pickens. Belatedly, the Federal government reinforcements arrived at Forts Taylor and Jefferson in the Florida Keys barely in time to ensure their retention by the Union. Confederate General

Braxton Bragg, in command at Pensacola of the first heterogeneous garrison from several seceded states, while unable to wrest Fort Pickens away from its Federal defenders, turned Pensacola into the most thoroughly defended region of Florida.⁹³ Florida militia units occupied St. Vincent's Island and St. Marks, Apalachicola, Tampa, and Cedar Key. On the east coast, Fort Marion and Fort Clinch were garrisoned. The surplus cannons from Fort Marion were transported to other locations. Scattered militia units were in the vicinities of Fernandina, Fort Clinch, Amelia Island, Jacksonville, Palatka, and St. Augustine. These militia units served primarily as coast watchers, drilled, performed guard duty, and worked at converting sand dunes to defensive positions.

On May 10, in a letter to the Confederate secretary of war, George T. Ward, who had led the fight in the secession convention against immediate secession, assessed the strategic situation as he saw it. He believed the Union would mount a land attack in Virginia in conjunction with a number of naval diversions along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Concerned with these naval diversions, he pointed out the vulnerability of Tallahassee which was "in close proximity to the Gulf--twenty miles by railroad--and in the midst of the most dense negro population and the largest plantations in this state."⁹⁴ He went on to state that it was impossible to fortify the entire coast and that it would be far better to concentrate

on a few major points such as St. Andrews, St. Josephs, Apalachicola, St. Marks, Cedar Key, Tampa, the mouth of the St. Johns or Jacksonville, and Fernandina. St. Augustine, he indicated, was already fortified. He continued:

I estimate the entire rank and file of Florida at a little less than nine thousand men. This is very small for a State having a sea-coast of fifteen hundred miles in extent, and an area of fifty-two thousand square miles. The country is deficient in arms, but still more in military organization and drill.⁹⁵

His proposed solution was to augment key defensive positions with a combination of small armed steamers to cruise the coast acting with local volunteers who were to be enrolled, trained, armed, and paid by the Confederate government and, in case of engagement, backed up by "the militia of the country."⁹⁶ These local volunteers were to be trained as infantry and artillery and to be transferred only by the president in an emergency, which, in effect, would take coast defense out of state politics.

Militarily, Ward was suggesting a new mobilization policy and also anticipating to a degree the formation of a mobile defense to counter the Union's naval advantage, not just for Florida but for the entire Confederacy. He was anxious about the part being played by local politics in defensive preparations and the lack of central direction. Ward also foresaw that other factors besides military would be important in this war and argued against stripping the coast of citizens and slaves, disrupting planting and

industry because "Money is the sinews of war."⁹⁷ In a rare insight into modern war, he wrote:

This war will not be determined by a single pitched battle of two large armies. There will be the line of the Ohio, the line of the Potomac, the line of the Atlantic States, and the line of the Gulf States. Until we can take the ocean with a navy on equal terms with the enemy--a distant day--the conflict on these two last must be at the water's edge.⁹⁸

Here, Ward was hedging. On one hand he talked of defending selected major points while on the other hand he was advocating a defense at the water's edge. Ward also suggested in his letter that men from Florida would be more willing to volunteer for service with the Confederacy if they were assured that the Confederacy had provided for the protection of their homes.⁹⁹

Starting with the latter days of 1860, Florida's preparations for war were chaotic, confused, wasteful, inefficient, misdirected, and close to self-defeating. There was a complete absence of central direction, either for Florida's needs or for Florida's contribution to the Confederacy. The governor, governor-elect, Florida's national and local politicians, the duly appointed officials and extra-legal convention committees who had appropriated the power to "speak for the people," citizen's groups, and self-seeking individuals, among a host of groups of all sizes and influences, attempted to set policies and priorities, or influence those who did.

Military command within the state was confused. There was a Confederate commander in west Florida at Pensacola but no military commander for east or middle Florida was assigned by the Confederate war department until General John B. Grayson's appointment late in August.¹⁰⁰ Because of the delay in arrival of General Grayson's successor after his death, there was no Confederate commander in middle and east Florida who was able to provide central direction until November 1861, nine months after the firing on Fort Sumter. General Grayson's one contribution was a report he submitted to the secretary of war after being in Florida nine days and at Fernandina five days. Grayson cited what he termed the deplorable condition of the state and then wrote, "As sure as the sun rises, unless cannon, powder &c., be sent to Florida in the next thirty days, she will fall into the hands of the North. Nothing human can prevent it."¹⁰¹ After itemizing his needs, he continued, "Florida will become a Yankee province unless measures for her relief are promptly made."¹⁰² The absence of an effective Confederate commander in middle and east Florida to provide the much needed central control and direction resulted in efforts at mobilization that were erratic and wasteful.

By June 1, 1861, the significant military and naval installations in Florida were about evenly split between the Union and Confederate forces. Union strength figures for forces in Florida dated June 30th, 1861, show a total of

1,939 men distributed between Pensacola and Key West.¹⁰³ Florida's state troops held Fort Marion and Fort Clinch on the Atlantic coast and the Confederate Provisional government held Barrancas Barracks, Warrington Navy Yard, and Forts McRee and Barrancas.¹⁰⁴ Other positions on the Gulf and Atlantic coasts were held by southern forces but were relatively lightly defended. Apalachicola had two brass six-pounder field pieces, St. Marks and Cedar Key two heavy cannons each, Fernandina and Jacksonville had constructed redoubts, each containing four heavy guns, and Fort Marion at St. Augustine had twelve cannons of which only four were mounted.¹⁰⁵

During the summer and fall of 1861 both Governor Perry and Governor-elect Milton gave advice to local and Confederate commanders, wrote extensively to officials of the provisional government at all levels, wrote other state governors, wrote Florida's representatives to the Provisional government, used their influence with members of both the elected and quasi-official state leadership groups; in short, did everything they could conceivably do in an attempt to provide for Florida's military needs as they saw them.

East of Pensacola, the two most likely points of attack by Federal forces appeared to be Fernandina on the Atlantic and Apalachicola on the Gulf of Mexico, some 250 miles apart. A considerable portion of Florida's internal dissension over

defensive priorities and allocation of resources had to do with the relative merits of these two points.

Apalachicola was a gateway to Tallahassee, the Florida planting counties, and the interior of Georgia and Alabama via the Chattahoochee River. Originally defenseless, Confederate forces raised in Florida built defenses there and at nearby St. Marks, Cedar Key, and Tampa with guns obtained from Fort Marion at Saint Augustine and from outside sources. The local citizens at Apalachicola had taken the first steps towards its defense by setting up a battery on St. Vincent's Island. While they were constructing the battery, the 4th Florida Regiment's Colonel Edward Hopkins and five companies arrived on the island, set up camp, and appropriated all of the guns that former Senator Stephen R. Mallory, who had been appointed secretary of the navy in Jefferson Davis's cabinet, had helped the local citizens to obtain. Colonel Hopkin's forces then started work on their own emplacement which left the approaches to the town defenseless. The local citizens petitioned the secretary of war for help, since they knew the governor was powerless in this situation. Governor Milton, however, stepped into this situation in a letter to Secretary Mallory. Governor Milton suggested that Colonel Hopkins' regiment, which was spread out between Apalachicola and Tampa, be concentrated and sent to Pensacola for training in exchange for Colonel Anderson's Magnolia Regiment which, with help from local militia and a

few experienced artillerists, could defend Apalachicola.¹⁰⁶

The governor addressed this problem when he wrote:

The officers of the regiments mustered into the Confederate service in the State imagine that they are entirely independent of the State authority, and if it is proper I wish you would request the Secretary of War to issue a suitable general order upon the subject especially in the State.¹⁰⁷

This last, of course, was impossible but reflects the conflict between state and central government over control and employment of forces that had been raised within a state and the conflict between those two governments on strategic priorities.

On October 18, Governor Milton wrote directly to President Davis concerning a number of complaints. The first had to do with the raising of cavalry units in the state by local politicians. Milton believed that the defense of the state should be by batteries of heavy caliber guns located at key points with concentrated supporting infantry.¹⁰⁸ The governor explained his reasoning:

The large majority of those who were willing to serve as soldiers of infantry are now in favor of riding into service, and I assure you, sir, a battle will never be fought in Florida by cavalry, unless the want of proper coast defenses, artillery, and infantry, shall induce an invasion, and will then be fought at great disadvantage.¹⁰⁹

The governor expressed his concern for Apalachicola and suggested that if given a little help, he would defend Apalachicola with state troops.¹¹⁰ On October 24, in a letter to the secretary of war, Milton suggested that the military department of Middle and East Florida be so arranged

as to include Apalachicola and St. Andrew's.¹¹¹ On October 28, Milton again wrote to the secretary of war protesting the central government's use of the Chattahoochee River as the dividing line between the two military departments in Florida and now suggested that Apalachicola and St. Andrews would be better off in General Bragg's department in West Florida. Governor Milton gave as reasons for this turn around that Apalachicola and St. Andrew's were more "conveniently connected with Pensacola than any important place in Middle or East Florida."¹¹² Governor Milton also cited certain conflicts over authority between state and Confederate troops which had taken place [involving Colonel Hopkins] and certain unnecessary expenses which had been incurred because of differences in perceived defensive requirements between state and Confederate authorities.¹¹³ In closing, Governor Milton advised that he was working on a presentation of his views concerning a new military department which would embrace parts of Georgia, Alabama, and Florida adjacent to the Chattahoochee River.¹¹⁴ He did present his views a day later, but in a letter to President Davis:

Now permit me to say that Georgia and Alabama are as much, if not more, interested in the defense of Apalachicola, so far as commerce is concerned, as Florida; therefore, in view of our extended coast, and the almost insurmountable obstacles to its successful defense, I would recommend, most respectfully and earnestly, that a military department be composed of the counties contiguous on both sides of the Chattahoochee River, so as to embrace Columbus, Georgia.¹¹⁵

In strong language, Milton deplored the vulnerability of Florida:

My opinion has been, and is yet, that if General Scott . . . really desired the subjugation of the South . . . the conquest of Florida would have been promptly made. . . . The conquest of Florida, as one of the seven states, would have had a powerful influence upon foreign nations, an inspiring effect upon the minds of his troops, and of the citizens and Government of the United States, and formed a basis for future operations which would have checked Virginia and other States that have not seceded, and dispirited many in the seceded States who apprehended with fear and trembling the consequences of a change of government. . . . As it is, unable to conquer any other State, may not Florida claim their attention?¹¹⁶

Governor Milton wrote to Governor Joseph E. Brown of Georgia on October 31 1861, seeking help for his proposal of the tri-state military department.¹¹⁷ Governor Milton's plan for a mid-Florida defense never came into being. It is instructive as an example of the machinations that were taking place between various levels of government over strategic priorities and use of limited resources. Although scarcely considered at all by Governor Milton in his concern over the defenses of the state, both the Confederate and Federal government were much more interested in Fernandina than Apalachicola. On November 1, 1861 (prior to the Port Royal attack), General Trapier wrote to Governor Milton from Charleston in anticipation of leaving for Florida. After saying he was unfamiliar with the numbers of troops in middle and east Florida, he stated that he believed it would require 7,000 troops of all arms to defend and requested the governor to call up at once a sufficient number of regiments to make

up that force.¹¹⁸ In view of the problems Governor Milton was having in trying to raise state militia troops in competition with the recruiting efforts of the Confederate Army officials, this letter probably met with a dubious reception. General Trapier certainly did not aid the governor's disposition when he wrote, "Fernandina, (or Amelia Island) is obviously the point most likely to become the object of the enemy's first attack."¹¹⁹

The concern of Governor Milton with middle Florida and his lack of concern for east Florida was not lost upon the residents of east Florida who were beginning to believe themselves being abandoned by both Florida and the Confederacy. The state was not united and as recently as the election of 1856 efforts had been made to attempt to divide the state into more than one political entity. Pro-Union sentiment was more likely to appear in east Florida than in middle or west Florida. State Militia Brigadier-General Richard. F. Floyd had requested permission from the governor on April 11, 1862, to place portions of east Florida under martial law because "the country bordering the Saint John's River is infested by numerous and dangerous traitors."¹²⁰ Floyd enclosed a letter from a Captain Pearson commanding the Ocklawaha Rangers who had stated, "I regret very much to have to report to you that at least three-fourth's of the people on the Saint John's River and east of it are aiding and abetting the enemy. . . ."¹²¹ In General Grayson's letter

of September 13, 1861 to the secretary of war detailing the deplorable state of Fernandina's defenses, he enclosed a copy of the following circular which had been posted around the city:

All loyal citizens of the United States are hereby notified that the Federal troops will take possession of the island of Amelia in a few days, and if they desire to escape the vengeance of an outraged Government they must assemble on the south end of the island. All those found at that point, except the military, will be regarded as good citizens of the United States.

Assemble on the right.¹²²

East Florida had become increasingly apathetic toward the Confederacy and with the increasingly provincial concern of the governor with middle Florida and the subsequent withdrawal of Confederate troops from the coast, began to accept the idea of being occupied sooner or later by the Federal government. Mayor H. H. Hoeg of Jacksonville advised the citizens of his town that:

Inasmuch as all the Confederate troops, arms, and munitions of war upon the St. John's River and in east and south Florida generally are ordered away, and that the east and south are to be abandoned, it is useless to attempt a defense of the city . . . and therefore, upon the approach of the enemy, it should be surrendered.¹²³

On November 5 1861, General Robert E. Lee was assigned to command a new military department embracing the coasts of South Carolina, Georgia, and East Florida.¹²⁴ His immediate concern was the Union attack on Port Royal which took place on November 7. Florida's defense, because of her comparative lack of strategic importance, had long been of low priority.

While decisions were being made concerning higher priority locations to be defended, Florida was left to fend for herself. General Lee decided that it was impossible to defend the entire south Atlantic coastline and therefore concentrated on defending the points he considered critical such as the entrance to Cumberland Sound and Brunswick and the water approaches to Savannah and Charleston.¹²⁵ In connection with the entrance to Cumberland Sound, General Lee dispatched Navy Lieutenant William A. Webb to Fernandina from Savannah on November 12 to help complete the artillery batteries located there and train men to service the guns.¹²⁶ General Lee's ordnance officer, Lieutenant Colonel Gill, inspected the defenses at Fernandina on November 17 and reported that the batteries on Amelia Island were not yet completed with some guns still to be changed and others mounted.¹²⁷ General Lee made a rapid inspection tour of his own from Savannah to Fernandina. Concerned about the defenses controlling the entrance to Cumberland Sound, General Lee ordered navy Commander Charles McBlair to Fernandina. On December 18, he ordered the 24th Mississippi to Fernandina to augment the Florida forces protecting the batteries on Cumberland and Amelia Island. Lee wanted to insure that defenses on Georgia's side of Cumberland Sound would be manned.¹²⁸ This concern with Fernandina brought a complaint from Governor Milton to the secretary of war on December 26, 1861, about Confederate defensive priorities. In his letter

he wrote, "Thrice the expense has been incurred and thrice the force assembled for the defense of Fernandina, and yet Apalachicola is decidedly the most important commercial city, and, in a strategic point of view, in the hands of the enemy would afford greater facilities for injury to the South."¹²⁹ It would appear that Governor Milton's opposition to east coast defense and concern over the defense of mid-Florida was influenced more by local politics than national strategy. When it was obvious that General Lee had rejected Gulf coast defenses in favor of those on the Atlantic coast, Governor Milton organized his own state troops under his appointee Brigadier General Richard F. Floyd to defend the Apalachicola area.¹³⁰ After all of Governor Milton's protests concerning the raising of cavalry troops in Florida, it is ironic that the 612-man unit contained two companies of mounted infantry.¹³¹

General Lee made a second inspection tour of Fernandina in early January 1862. He found shortages of cannon, powder, clothing, and ammunition and made arrangements to have these shipped to Fernandina from Richmond, Augusta, Columbus, and Savannah.¹³² He missed seeing General Trapier who had made his headquarters at Tallahassee. The secretary of war had ordered General Trapier to make his headquarters at Fernandina as "being the only point in your district subject to serious attack by heavy forces."¹³³ General Trapier, however, had apparently swung over to Governor

Milton's thinking concerning the importance of Apalachicola and the middle of the state because he presented a long argument to General Samuel Cooper, the Confederate adjutant and inspector general, on why he should stay in Tallahassee.¹³⁴ Before this situation was resolved, more significant events overrode the question of whether Fernandina or Apalachicola was the more important point to be defended and drastically changed Florida's defensive system.

On January 14 1862, a called session of the Florida convention met to discuss the "financial difficulties" of the state. It considered, among other items, requesting the Florida congressional delegation to seek funding for joining the Pensacola and Georgia railroad with Georgia's Albany and Gulf road as a "military necessity," assigning Colonel W. G. M. Davis's controversial 1st Cavalry Regiment to General Albert Sidney Johnston's forces in the west, making money available for the health of the troops at Fernandina, and suggesting that General Trapier either stay with his troops at Fernandina or be relieved.¹³⁵ This last resolution caused General Trapier to request that he be relieved from duties in Florida and assigned elsewhere.¹³⁶ Additionally, much to the dismay of Governor Milton, two ordinances were passed. One created the four-man executive council. Two days later, the state militia was abolished and responsibility for the defense of Florida was assigned to the Confederate government.¹³⁷

A second event having a bearing on Florida's situation was the fall of Roanoke Island, North Carolina, which illustrated the danger to remote and isolated detachments and batteries on the coast. A number of islands were abandoned, including Cumberland, and cannon from the Georgia coastal batteries were split between Savannah and Fernandina. General Lee, however, still felt at this point that Fernandina, Jacksonville, and the St. Johns River were to be held.¹³⁸

The third event, or rather series of events, that would leave Florida almost defenseless was the Confederate disasters at Forts Donelson and Henry in Tennessee which necessitated the sending of all available troops to the Army of the Tennessee to bolster the sagging Confederate defenses. Accordingly, on February 24 1862, the secretary of war ordered General Lee to:

Withdraw all such forces as are now employed in the defense of the seaboard of Florida, taking proper steps to secure the guns and munitions of war, and to send forward the troops to Tennessee, to report to General A. S. Johnston, by the most expeditious route.

The only troops to be retained in Florida are such as necessary to defend the Apalachicola River, as the enemy could by that river at high water send his gunboats into the very middle of the State of Georgia.¹³⁹

Governor Milton had seemingly won his battle over defensive priorities within the state, but it was a hollow victory. Governor Milton's response to the central government was dated March 5:

The effect of the order is to abandon Middle, East, and South Florida to the mercy or abuse of the Lincoln Government. It cannot be possible that the order was intended to have such an effect. If strictly obeyed, the forces at Saint Augustine, on the Saint John's River, at Tampa, and at this place have to be ordered to the defenses of the Chattahoochee River or to Tennessee. I cannot and will not believe that an order to have that effect would have been issued without previous notice to the executive of the State, that proper measures might have been advised for the protection of the lives, liberty, and property of the citizens of Middle, East, and South Florida. Moreover, the order, if executed, would not, with the forces now in Florida, secure the defenses upon the Chattahoochee, for if the enemy were in possession of Tallahassee and Saint Andrew's or Saint Joseph's Bays, they can attack in the rear all batteries which may be constructed on either side of the river.¹⁴⁰

Governor Milton closed with a plea to retain enough of the 6,000 stand of arms that had just come into New Smyrna by blockade runner to equip 2,500 Florida militia in order to defend the state.¹⁴¹ While the governor expressed some concern for the residents of east Florida, a number of residents of Tallahassee were less considerate. They forwarded a petition to the Florida congressional delegation recommending that Fernandina be abandoned and that the 2nd Florida Regiment be returned from Virginia to defend Tallahassee and the Chattahoochee River.¹⁴²

The order to evacuate Amelia Island was received on February 25 1862. The Federal expedition to take Fernandina showed up four days later. The Confederate forces had only been able to remove eighteen of the thirty-three guns in the fort, and the Federals captured the remaining fifteen. In addition, five more were later captured at the mouth of the

St. Johns where they had been emplaced to prevent Union intrusion into that river.¹⁴³ St. Augustine and Jacksonville were captured by Union forces within the next couple of days although Jacksonville was to be evacuated by the Federal forces a month later.¹⁴⁴ While the Union troops occupied Jacksonville, a number of residents had professed their loyalty to the Union, believing the Federal forces were going to stay in the area. When the Union troops left, those who had expressed their loyalty to the Union found themselves in a very difficult position. They either had to leave with the Union forces or face retaliation from those loyal to the Southern cause. The Union occupied Jacksonville four separate times and evacuated it three times. This pattern created serious credibility gaps concerning the Union's ability to protect those who professed loyalty to the Federal government.

On March 2, General Lee was ordered to Richmond.¹⁴⁵ By the middle of March 1862, the towns on Florida's east coast were under Federal control. Pensacola was being evacuated, Cedar Key and Apalachicola had been visited by Union forces, and General Trapier had been relieved and replaced by Floridian Joseph Finegan.¹⁴⁶ General Finegan was informed by General Lee that he was to pay particular attention to defense of the interior of the state and the lines of interior communication with both the Apalachicola and St. Johns rivers as of "primary importance."¹⁴⁷ In a request for

moretroops, General Finegan reported on September 29, 1862, that he had "but nine companies of infantry, five companies of Partisan Rangers, one regiment of cavalry, and two companies of light artillery in service."¹⁴⁸ General Finegan's strength report for Middle and East Florida showed a total of 1,726 present for duty."¹⁴⁹ General P. G. T. Beauregard eventually replaced General Lee as commander of the Department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.¹⁵²

After some movement of the boundary back and forth between the Chattahoochee and Apalachicola rivers, the district of Middle Florida was assigned to the command of Brigadier General Howell Cobb and his district's geographic limits defined as between the Suwannee River and the Choctawhatchee to include the navigable waters of the Chattahoochee and Flint rivers.¹⁵¹ General Finegan was assigned command of east Florida with headquarters to be at Lake City while General Cobb's headquarters were to be at Quincy. Both generals were told that no forces were available to send to them and they would have to recruit their own military forces.¹⁵²

Florida's system of defenses had changed dramatically within a relatively short time from a concern over the defense of selected key points along the coast to a last ditch defense of the interior using "home guard" and irregular units. Governor Milton wrote the Confederate secretary of war on August 5, 1862:

There is not at this time an organized regiment in this State. Companies are stationed at different places, but at no point in sufficient numbers and with suitable arrangements for defense against invasion by the enemy in moderate force. . . . The enemy command the Saint John's River, and are in possession of Saint Augustine and Fernandina, in East Florida. In West Florida, Pensacola, Apalachicola, Saint Joseph's, and Saint Andrew's Bays are blockaded and entirely unprotected. The highest vote ever cast in this State was 12,898. Eight infantry and one cavalry regiment, besides independent infantry companies enough to form a tenth regiment, have been ordered from and left the State in Confederate service. In the State are one infantry battalion, eight cavalry, two artillery, and three independent infantry companies, in the aggregate not more than 1,600 effective men. Scarcely a man to every mile of coast by which we are exposed to the power of the enemy. . . .

There is not within my knowledge a portion of the State free of skulking traitors, the majority of whom are of Northern birth and claiming to be citizens of Florida.¹⁵³

On both the Gulf and Atlantic coasts, exposed men and guns had been withdrawn into the interior where their main activity was watching and waiting, operating on interior lines, with occasional small forays into coastal areas.¹⁵⁴ By the summer of 1862, much of the earlier enthusiasm for the Confederacy had been dissipated by the realities of war and blockade. A significant part of the state was occupied or defenseless, the Federal blockade was tightening and its effects were being felt, and there appeared to be more southern disasters than victories. Apathy was commonplace and some Floridians seemed receptive to the idea of rejoining the Union. In September 1862, Governor Milton wrote to President Davis:

You are apprised that in Florida a very large minority were opposed to secession, and in many parts of the

State combinations existed to adhere to and maintain the United States Government, and even now in some portions of the State there are men who would eagerly seize any opportunity that promised success to the United States.¹⁵⁷

Florida had been the third state to secede from the Union but was later in the evolution of its defensive organization than most other Confederate states. Extremely limited in resources, overwhelmed by an impossible task dictated by geography, lacking in ordinance and skilled military leadership, low on defensive priorities of the provisional government, torn by internal division and lack of central control and direction in mobilization, Florida found herself isolated and disaffected from the rest of the Confederacy in the second year of the war. Internally divided, the western panhandle was more closely aligned with the Gulf and Mississippi valley than the rest of the state and the eastern portion similarly with the Atlantic coast and Georgia. The middle of the state, which had led in the road towards secession, contained the hard corps, patriotic Southerners while dissident elements and pro-Union sentiment grew in the eastern, southern and western portions of the state. Florida was a defensive liability to both herself and the central government, making little more than token contributions to the common defense. When the state's contribution of manpower was exhausted, she lost what little importance she had to the Confederacy. Strategically, in view of higher priorities elsewhere, the Confederacy had

little choice in her relationships with Florida. The state was assigned responsibility for her own defense under Confederate auspices and left to fend for herself as best she could with no men or weapons to be furnished by the central government. Two military departments were created, one without troops and one headed by a political appointee. For all intents and purposes, Florida found itself abandoned by the Confederacy it had been to eager to join, isolated and vulnerable to the enemy. Florida did, however, have more of value to the Confederacy to contribute and a preview of this was contained in an October 5, 1862 letter by Governor Milton to the secretary of war. Governor Milton wrote:

I presume there is no State where, in proportion to the amount cultivated, such abundant crops of corn, peas, potatoes, and sugar-cane have been made, and which will afford a more abundant supply of pork and beef than in Florida. The enemy are appraised of these facts and will avail themselves of the advantages to be derived from our abundance, to the exclusion of the Confederate States. . . .¹⁵⁶

As the major sources of subsistence supplies for the Confederacy were progressively reduced by Union activity, Florida would again receive attention from both sides. Until then, the state was subjected to several years of a combination of Federal raids and a tightening blockade.

Notes

¹ ORA I:1, p. 442.

- 2 Ibid., pp. 442-443.
- 3 Ibid., p. 443.
- 4 Ibid., pp. 348-349.
- 5 Ibid., pp. 350-351.
- 6 Ibid., p. 332.
- 7 Ibid., p. 349.
- 8 Ibid., pp. 331-332; William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 72.
- 9 ORA I:1, p. 333.
- 10 ORA I:52, Pt.I, p. 4.
- 11 Ibid., pp. 342-343.
- 12 ORA I:1, pp. 350-351.
- 13 William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 73.
- 14 Ibid., pp. 78-79.
- 15 ORA I:1, pp.349-350; Note: the ordnance at Fort McRee included 125 'sea-coast and garrison' cannon including 3 10-inch and 12 8-inch columbiads, 20 42's, 24 32's, 64 24's, etc. Ordnance at Fort Barrancas: 44 'sea-coast and garrison', cannon which included 13 8-inch columbiads and howitzers, 2 10-inch mortars, 11 32-pounders, 10 24's, 5 18's, 3 19's. The ordnance at Barrancas Barracks: 4 6's field guns and 2 12's howitzers. ORA I:1, pp.349-350; William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 83.
- 16 William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 81.
- 17 Johns, Florida During the Civil War, pp. 32-33.
- 18 George C. Bittle, "Florida Prepares for War, 1860-1861," Florida Historical Quarterly 51 (October, 1972): 144.
- 19 ORA IV:1, p. 333; William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 89.
- 20 William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 89.
- 21 Johns, Florida During the Civil War, p. 35.
- 22 ORA IV:1, pp. 117-119.

23 Ibid., p. 211.

24 Fred L. Robertson, compiler, Soldiers of Florida in the Seminole Indian-Civil-and Spanish-American Wars (Live Oak: Democrat Book and Job Print Company, 1903), passim.

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27 Ibid., pp. 222-223.

28 Ibid., p. 226.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid., 227.

31 ORA I:53, p. 165.

32 Ibid., p. 171.

33 Ibid., p. 333.

34 Ibid., p. 352.

35 Ibid., p. 174.

36 Ibid., p. 361.

37 ORA I:1, p. 469.

38 ORA IV:1, p. 412.

39 Fred L. Robertson, Soldiers of Florida, cited by William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 94.

40 Journal of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the State of Florida, 11th Session (Tallahassee, 1862), p. 81.

41 Ibid.

42 ORA IV:1, p. 290.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Rowland H. Rerick, Memoirs of Florida, Embracing a General History of the Province, Territory, and State; and Special Chapters Devoted to Finances, Banking, the Bench, and the Bar (Atlanta: The Southern Historical Association, 1902) II, p. 247.

46 Ibid., pp. 300-301.

47 ORA IV:1, pp. 288, 291, 301-302, 315-317.

48 Ibid., p. 292.

49 Ibid., p. 293.

50 Ibid., p. 296.

51 Ibid., p. 328.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid., 325.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid., p. 334.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid., 342.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 John F. Reiger, "Florida After Secession: Abandonment by the Confederacy And Its Consequences," Florida Historical Quarterly 50 (October, 1972): 130; William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 95

62 ORA I:1, p. 468.

63 ORA IV:1. p. 364.

64 Rerick, Memoirs Of Florida, I, p. 258.

65 Ibid.

66 ORA IV:1, p. 595.

67 Ibid.

68 ORA IV:1, p. 779; ORA I:52, Pt.II. pp. 12, 29; ORA I:1, p. 408.

69 ORA IV:1, p. 352.

70 Johns, Florida During the Civil War, p. 37.

71 ORA I:14, Pt.I, p. 494.

72 IV:1, p. 298.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid., 318-319.

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76 ORA I:53, p. 214.

77 Ibid., p. 248.

78 Ibid.

79 William C. Havard, "The Florida Executive Council, 1862," Florida Historical Quarterly 33 (July, 1954): p. 80.

80 Ibid.

81 Coulter, The Confederate States, p.273; Rerick, Memoirs Of Florida, p. 180.

82 Francis B. C.Bradlee, Blockade Running During the Civil War and the Effect of Land and Water Transportation on the Confederacy (Salem: Essex Institute, 1925), p. 207.

83 ORA IV:1, pp. 612, 778, 912.

84 House Journal, 12th Session (1862), pp. 55-56.

85 Ibid.

86 Ibid.

87 Jerrell H. Shofner and William M. Rogers, "Confederate Railroad Construction: The Live oak to Lawton Connector," Florida Historical Quarterly 43 (January,1965): 217.

88 Ibid.

89 Ibid., 227.

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91 Ibid., pp. 42, 51-52, 63, 103-05.

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102 Ibid.

103 ORA I:53, Pt.II, p. 301.

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110 Ibid.

111 Ibid., p. 294.

112 Ibid., p. 298.

113 Ibid.

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- 115 Ibid., p. 302.
- 116 Ibid., p. 300.
- 117 Ibid., p. 304.
- 118 Ibid., p. 307.
- 119 Ibid.
- 120 ORA I:53, p. 233.
- 121 Ibid., p. 234.
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- 125 Ibid., p. 327.
- 126 ORA I:53, p. 187.
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- 128 ORA I:53, p. 201.
- 129 ORA IV:1, pp. 354-355.
- 130 Guinn, "Coastal Defenses," p. 132.
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- 133 ORA I:53, p. 215.
- 134 Ibid.
- 135 Journal of the Convention of the People of Florida at a Called Session Begun and Held at the Capitol in the City of Tallahassee on Tuesday, January 14, 1862, (Tallahassee: 1862); Guinn, "Coastal Defenses," p. 318.
- 136 ORA I:53, pp. 216-217.
- 137 Ibid., pp. 31-33, 103; Guinn, "Coastal Defenses," p.

- 138 ORA I:6, pp. 380-381.
- 139 Ibid., p. 398.
- 140 Ibid., pp. 402-403.
- 141 Ibid.
- 142 ORA I:53, pp. 220-221,
- 143 ORA I:6, pp. 93-94.
- 144 Ibid., pp. 124-125.
- 145 ORA I:1, p. 400.
- 146 Ibid., p. 428.
- 147 ORA I:14, p. 477.
- 148 Ibid., p. 614.
- 149 Ibid.
- 150 Ibid., pp. 630, 665.
- 151 Ibid., pp. 677, 688.
- 152 Ibid., pp. 684, 689, 738.
- 153 ORA I:52, Pt.II, pp. 336-338.
- 154 Ibid., pp. 426-427.
- 155 ORA IV:2, p. 649.
- 156 ORA I:53, p. 258.

CHAPTER VI
BLOCKADE AND RAID--THE MIDDLE YEARS IN FLORIDA

During 1862 and 1863, the major war activities in and around Florida centered on tightening the blockade with occasional raids by the Federal troops on southern outposts and blockade-runners. The Blockade Board, appointed by Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, devised ways and the means of improving the blockade's efficiency. The Board's broad strategic plan was to maintain the blockade and included the seizure of certain southern ports as bases for the blockading forces. As a military measure, the blockade had two primary objectives: first, isolate the primarily agricultural southern states, dependent on the outside world for the necessities of life, from the sources of those necessities; second, to prevent the exportation of southern cotton, the South's main source of income, thereby depriving that government of its revenues for the war and the people of their very means of existence.¹

The blockade started as a traditional one in which a few large vessels were kept moving at a distance in front of a port. This was effective in keeping the respect of major neutral powers for the blockade. However, a contraband trade emerged, and this required the blockading force to use the innovation of anchoring large numbers of small vessels at

entrances to blockaded harbors and keeping vessels close to shore in exposed positions in all sorts of weather.

There were four characteristics of this blockade which made it unprecedented. The first was the peculiar formation of the shore which gave almost a double coastline throughout, penetrated by numerous inlets giving access to a complicated network of channels. Second was the vicinity of "neutral" ports friendly to blockade-runners. There were four intermediary points for trade with the South, Bermuda, Nassau, Havana, and Matamoros; of these Nassau, only 180 miles in a direct line from Florida, was the most important. Savannah, Charleston, and Wilmington, however, rather than Florida were the main ports of entry for the blockade runners, and the run to these points from Nassau was between 500 and 600 miles taking about three days for a one-way trip.² Third, the southern cotton monopoly made the blockade a source of irritation to neutrals. Last, was the introduction of steam powered blockade-runners.³

The blockade began as a blockade de facto and not one of notification. Beginning in the spring and summer of 1861, vessels were progressively stationed at such points as Savannah, Mobile, and New Orleans. Later, the naval forces, with the help of small bodies of troops, gained footholds on the southern coast and converted the blockade into a military occupation. These places became the headquarters for the various blockading squadrons and bases for coaling, repairs,

and replenishment that reduced the time that ships were "off station." Fernandina was selected by the Blockade Board to serve such a purpose, and its acquisition in early March 1862, along with St. Augustine and control over the mouth of the St. Johns, gave the South Atlantic Blockade Squadron bases within its operating area.

The management of the blockade of Florida was different from that of other states. There were no large commercial centers to draw blockade-runners with valuable cargo nor defended strategic coastal points giving quick access to the interior. There were, however, numerous bays and inlets where small vessels could enter and remain concealed. It was impossible to shut off all blockade-running completely; the best tactic was for the blockaders to patrol the coast and, when a blockade-runner was discovered ashore, send in small bodies of troops to capture or burn it. The history of the Florida blockade is primarily one characterized by countless number of minor engagements such as:

boarding parties, cutting-out expeditions, raids on salt-works, sudden dashes into remote and unfrequented inlets on dark nights, through tortuous channels, usually followed by the capture of cotton-laden schooners, or stray boats, with the loss of a man or two, here and there.⁴

Few of these engagements were of any significance by themselves but their cumulative effect contributed to the slow strangulation of the Florida economy.

In relation to Florida, the task of the Union blockaders was made easier by the relative lack of

importance Florida had for blockade-runners, the increasingly non-military aspects of the cargoes that were carried, and the inability of the local residents to replace the ships that were captured or destroyed.

The third report of the Blockade Board gave little attention to east Florida. Florida had few suitable harbors and few connections with the interior. It was believed that Jacksonville and St. Augustine could be blockaded in the usual manner while the lower coast could be patrolled by two small cruisers which would continually check its shores and bays. In respect to south Florida, the Board members declared, "It can hardly be said to be inhabited and is of no great consequence as a convenient place of resort for pirates."⁵ Besides being thinly populated, the area was without any railroad facilities and cargoes that came into the lower east Florida ports such as New Smyrna faced a difficult trip by land and water to get to a railroad.

Another reason for the lack of importance of Florida to blockade-runners surfaced in a letter written in 1864 to George A. Trenholm, the Confederate secretary of the treasury. The secretary's attention was called to the difficulties of blockade-running into the major ports of Wilmington, Charleston, and Mobile, and it was suggested that surveys be conducted to find safer ports in Florida. In his endorsement of the letter, Trenholm mentioned a basic difficulty with the use of Florida ports for blockade-

running--the entrances to selected bays were not protected and after vessels had entered and gone up river for safety, they could be bottled up by a single blockading vessel at the entrance.⁶ The withdrawal of Confederate troops from east Florida and the seizure of the ports of Brunswick and St. Marys in Georgia and Fernandina, St. Augustine, and Jacksonville in Florida gave the Federal navy a strong grip on Florida's portion of the south Atlantic coast. In addition, the occasional patrols and raids up the St. Johns and St. Marys rivers and along the coast did a lot to discourage blockade-runners from venturing into Florida.

Blockade-running in the early part of the war was carried on by ships of all sizes and along the entire 3,000 mile coastline of the Confederacy. With the tightening of the blockade certain ship's characteristics such as speed, invisibility, and handiness along with a draft shallow enough to enable passage when loaded over sand bars were essential; storage space was a secondary priority. Early in the war years substantial quantities of arms and ammunition were brought in. As the war progressed, blockade-running attracted a horde of speculators and adventurers, and the needs of the Confederacy took second place to luxury type goods that took up minimum cargo space but brought maximum profits. Such items as steel rails, machinery, iron plates, and heavy equipment required too much space, were heavy causing reduced speed, and could only be sold to the government at fixed

prices. Luxury goods could be sold to the highest bidder and the people who both demanded and could pay for these goods were located in the major port cities. Payment was demanded in gold or cotton. The Confederacy was thus hurt two ways; it was not getting badly needed war materials and its financial resources were being drained with resultant damage to Confederate securities leading to inflation. There were some examples of successful profit-making through blockade-running in Florida such as the partnership of Captain John McKay and Jacob "Jake" Summerlin in running cattle out of Charlotte Harbor to Havana.⁷ However, the "big operators" in the blockade-running business dealt in higher priced merchandise and converged on the larger centers of trade. These men had little interest in the outcome of the war; their main objective was to make as much money as possible in the shortest time.⁸

Blockade-running in the first year of the war was amateurish. Later, the effective pattern that developed was for large ships from Europe to bring goods to transfer points where the goods would then be transshipped on to smaller vessels who carried them into the southern ports. Mention has been made of the two shipments of arms that came in to New Smyrna in this manner. The biggest transfer point was Nassau which was only 515 miles from Charleston, 570 miles from Wilmington, and 180 miles to Florida. Next was Bermuda, 675 miles from Wilmington and 775 miles from Charleston. In

the Gulf, Havana was the chief depot.⁹ The nearness of the Federal base at Key West, the strictness of the Gulf blockade, and the fall of New Orleans, along with all of the other factors mentioned, centered the attention of blockade runners on Savannah, Charleston, and Wilmington, and away from Florida.

In one study of blockade-running through Georgia and Florida ports during the Civil War, the author came to this conclusion:

Insofar as its contributions to the war effort of the South and the material needs of its far-flung civilian populace are concerned, blockade-running through the Georgia and East Florida ports during the War Between the States may be written off as an insignificant effort and be dismissed with a shrug. The extant records disclose that successful runs between these ports and foreign sources were so infrequent after 1861, and the cargo capacities of most of the vessels that ran from the beginning until the end of the blockade were so small, the game was not worth the candle. They also make it clear why neither the Confederate Government, hard pressed as it was for arms, munitions, and equipment for its forces in the field, nor the Georgians or Floridians, whose appetites for lush profits were as keen as those of their neighbors in the Carolinas and Gulf states, ever attempted large-scale operations through any of the Georgia or East Florida ports.¹⁰

Marcus W. Price's study shows that from the date of the proclamation of the blockade, only 225 vessels were known to have run in or out of these ports making some 1,302 attempts. This compares with 2,960 from Gulf ports and 2,054 from Carolina ports.¹¹ The vast majority of the attempts from Georgia and east Florida were made in 1861 with only fifty-four attempts in 1862, sixty in 1863, sixty-three in 1864,

and two in 1865.¹² When it is realized that most of these attempts were made by small schooners and sloops, the size of the activity becomes very small indeed. The blockade of the coast of Florida was effective; what did manage to get through was of little consequence to the war effort. Just as important, the desired effect of waging economic warfare was achieved; Florida was cut off from the imports she had come to rely upon and was unable to export those items she produced that were the basis of her economy. The war was brought home to Florida by the blockade.

As the blockade tightened and the Confederate troops were reduced and withdrawn into the interior, the Federal forces found some success in raiding coastal localities. A number of these raids were small scale search and destroy types whose objectives were salt-works (whose lights, by the way, assisted blockade-runners in navigation), blockade-runners, small caches of supplies, or individuals and groups. A number of these raids, however, were of a larger scale. The success of these raids may have helped condition Federal leaders towards favorable consideration of the proposed Federal expedition into Florida in early 1864.

On January 16, 1862, almost six weeks prior to the seizure of Fernandina, the Federal blockading ship Hatteras attacked Cedar Key, the Gulf terminus of the Florida Railroad. A landing party from the ship entered the town, destroyed the wharf of the Florida Railroad Company, its

depot, several railroad flat cars, the telegraph office, and seven small vessels in the harbor.¹³ Two Confederate companies defending the town had just been sent to Fernandina in expectation of an attack at that location, leaving a lieutenant and twenty-two men from the 4th Florida Regiment to protect Cedar Key.¹⁴ The Confederate report of the action reported the existence of pro-Union supporters in Cedar Key.¹⁵ When the Union forces occupied Fernandina on March, 4, the Union possessed or controlled both termini of the Florida Railroad.

The Union occupation of St. Augustine and Jacksonville shortly after Fernandina was taken also revealed the presence of a number of pro-Union sympathizers, some of whom were desirous of bringing in cotton and other products for shipment to the North for sale.¹⁶ In General Horatio G. Wright's report of the occupation of Jacksonville, he informed his headquarters that the rebels had burned seven saw-mills, some 4,000,000 feet of lumber, the railroad depot, a large hotel [the Judson], some private houses, and a gunboat under construction.¹⁷ The commander of the South Atlantic Blockade Squadron, Captain Samuel Francis DuPont, reported to his superior that "the sawmills, with others in this country, were of Northern enterprise and capital, by which these people of Florida had their endless forests turned into gold."¹⁸ The search for lumber set up another

Union raid, one however that was costly to the Federal forces.

It had been reported to Flag Officer DuPont that a large cache of live oak was hidden in the vicinity of Mosquito Inlet. This area was already receiving Federal attention because of its use by blockade-runners, particularly in the recent arrival of two shipments of arms. Commander C. R. Rodgers of the Wabash, had written Flag Officer DuPont from St. Augustine on March 12, "I am led to believe that Mosquito Inlet, upon which Smyrna is situated, has been much used for the introduction of arms from the Bahamas."¹⁹ His suspicions were well founded as the steamer Caroline (Kate) had run in two cargoes of military supplies from Nassau and the steamer Cecile another.²⁰ The Union gunboats Penguin and Henry Andrew were sent to locate the lumber and conduct a reconnaissance of the area. On March 23 1861, a landing party led by the captains of both ships was ambushed on its way back from a land reconnaissance, and both captains were killed along with two or three of their men. Two other sailors were wounded and captured.²¹ The Henry Andrews under a new captain was sent back on March 25 to recover the bodies of the two naval officers killed in the raid and to locate the lumber. The bodies of the two Federal officers were returned by Captain Pickett Bird of the 3rd Florida, elements of which had conducted the ambush, under a flag of truce with copies of their mission to locate the

lumber still on their bodies. The new captain of the Henry Andrews had no trouble locating the lumber.²²

While the Union forces had occupied Jacksonville, a number of Federal gunboats had run up and down the river, the Ottowa to Orange Mills, some eighty miles up river, and the Ellen some miles further. This patrolling of the St. Johns River was continued even after the Federal troops had evacuated Jacksonville which increased the difficulty for anything that had been run through the blockade moving with any speed through Florida. It also resulted in the capture of a number of vessels used in blockade running, to include the yacht America which had been sunk in Dunn's Creek and was raised and recovered by Federal Lieutenant Isaac Stevens.²³

In response to intelligence reports that the Confederate forces were reinforcing east Florida and the feeling that too many Federal troops were tied up in occupation duties along the coast, Major General David Hunter, commanding the Department of the South, on April 2, 1862, ordered the evacuation of Jacksonville. At that time, there were some 2,570 Federal troops between Fernandina and St. Augustine with 1,400 in Jacksonville.²⁴ This action drew criticism. Briagadier General Horatio Wright, commanding the troops in Jacksonville, wrote to General Hunter:

The necessity for withdrawal of the troops from Jacksonville is to be regretted. A considerable number of the inhabitants had avowed themselves publicly in favor of our cause, and encouraged by the proclamation issued by General Sherman to the people of East

Florida, had been active in their efforts to organize a State and city government.²⁵

The proclamation referred to was issued on March 20, 1862 by General Thomas W. Sherman and called for assemblages of loyal people to gather and swear their allegiance to the United States. They might then "organize your government and elect your officers in the good old way of the past."²⁶ Flag Officer DuPont was highly upset at hearing of the evacuation. On March 6, both Flag Officer DuPont and General Sherman had received similar letters from Assistant Secretary of the Navy Gustavas Fox telling them to take Fernandina because "the moral effect on Florida and the return of that State to its allegiance was vastly more important than the capture of Savannah."²⁷ Flag Officer DuPont wrote to Gustavus Fox on April 3, 1861, that Florida could have been taken by General Sherman in "six weeks with a cavalry regiment and 5,000 troops," repeating an idea DuPont had stated three weeks earlier to Fox.²⁸ DuPont further informed Fox that he was getting letters everyday from loyal citizens in Jacksonville and St. Augustine worried about their relations.²⁹ In a letter written on May 22, 1861, DuPont quoted a conversation with Captain Drayton who expressed the opinion that "he fully believes East Florida would have organized itself into a State if Jacksonville had not been abandoned--it was silly beyond measure, and when I think two weeks after the forces were withdrawn, General Hunter let sixty officers go on leave."³⁰

Apalachicola was attacked by a Federal landing force on April 2. Confederate troops evacuated the town and it was considered a "no-man's land" until the end of the war. On May 20 a Union landing party was attacked at Crooked River in west Florida with some loss on the Union side. On June 15 a small detachment from the Kingfisher landed near St. Mark's and burned several houses and the lighthouse.³¹ Tampa was shelled on June 30 and July 1, and attacked by a landing party on October 16. This type of activity continued until the end of the war.

Confederate General Finegan had received instructions to protect the Apalachicola and St. Johns rivers. In compliance with these orders, in September 1862, Finegan caused gun batteries to be constructed at Yellow Bluff and St. Johns Bluff on the St. Johns River to prevent Federal gunboats from using that river. The Union response was a combined operation the following month involving six gunboats and 1,500 men. The troops were landed in the rear of the Confederate gun positions, causing them to be evacuated without a fight by the defending force with a loss to the Confederates of six eight-inch guns and two four-inch guns along with sundry small arms and military equipment.³² Jacksonville was briefly occupied but, since the only purpose of the expedition had been to reopen the St. Johns for the Union gunboats, the troops withdrew after achieving their purpose and returned to Hilton Head.

On January 23rd through February 1st, 1863, the 1st South Carolina Volunteer Regiment (colored) under Colonel Thomas Higginson made an expedition up the St. Marys River, which forms part of the border between Florida and Georgia. Their mission was primarily for recruitment of blacks for the colored regiments being formed in the Department of the South. With only limited success, some commercial products were brought out, and the raid by colored troops had a strong psychological effect upon the residents of the area and the rest of the deep South when it became known.

Jacksonville was occupied for the third time on March 3, 1863, by a combination of white and black troops. The main purpose was again recruitment for the colored regiments and, as General Rufus Saxton phrased it, "To occupy Jacksonville and make it the base of operations for the arming of negroes and securing in this way possession of the entire State of Florida."³³ The Federal troops raided and plundered the countryside, meeting more resistance this time than before because of increased Confederate forces in the area. Perhaps making history, Confederate General Finegan had a thirty-two pounder rifled gun mounted on a railroad car and run up to a point where it could throw several shells into Jacksonville with unknown effect.³⁴ A series of skirmishes took place with little progress made towards either recruitment or increase of pro-Union support. General Hunter ordered the third evacuation of Jacksonville which was

carried out on March 31, 1863. In a letter written on April 4, 1863, by General Rufus Saxton to Secretary of War Stanton, notwithstanding the actual results of the expedition, the General claimed:

The operation was in every way successful, and had it not been withdrawn, would in a short time have cleared the State of Florida of their troops and secured large amounts of cotton and other valuables for the Government. . . .

I shall urge upon the commanding officer of this department the importance of reoccupying Florida as soon as the Charleston expedition is over. . . . With the Saint John's River as a base of operations the entire State can be readily occupied by negro forces and restored to the Union. Had the expedition been allowed to remain in Florida I am confident that its success would have fully equaled your expectations.³⁵

The evacuation of Jacksonville by the Federal troops was marred by fires that sprang up suddenly in parts of the city and a number of private homes that were looted by hoodlums among the departing soldiers. The black troops were initially blamed, but news reporters who were present and Colonel Thomas Higginson of the 1st South Carolina Volunteers maintained it was done by white troops in that part of the city in which they had been quartered.³⁶ The burning of Jacksonville, along with similar happenings in Georgia and South Carolina, was the subject of a strongly worded letter General Beauregard, commanding the Confederate Department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, sent to General Gillmore, the new commander of the Federal Department of the South.³⁷ After listing numerous examples of the destruction of civilian property, Beauregard went on to castigate the

Federal government for its use of "members of a servile race" as soldiers citing Napoleon's refusal to use volunteering Russian serfs as an exemplary action to be followed.³⁸

Federal forces returned to Mosquito Inlet in late July 1863, in a operation noteworthy because ships of both the South Atlantic and East Gulf blockading Squadrons combined in the raid. Four ships swooped into the inlet and got close enough to shell New Smyrna and destroy the local hotel, the Sheldon House, owned by a family whose sons were blockade-runners. A landing party was sent in, and several small vessels were caught in the area and either taken or destroyed along with their cargoes of cotton.³⁹ Sporadic sniper fire was received and returned in heavy volume. An observer reported that the steamer Oleander fired her guns all day on July 26 and expended 280 shells "wastefully" on the 27th.⁴⁰ It was certainly retaliation for the ambush of the naval party looking for the lumber cache the previous year.

With the departure of the Federal troops from Jacksonville at the end of March 1863, the Federal raids in Flordia reverted to the smaller scale operations that had taken place prior to the September 1862 expedition to seize the Confederate gun emplacements at the entrance to the St. Johns river. Florida again became a backwash of the war, awaiting the day when developments might reawaken military interest in the State.

Notes

¹ James R. Soley, The Navy In The Civil War: The Blockade and the Cruisers, (New York: 1883), pp. 44-45.

² Ibid., p. 36.

³ Ibid., p. 44.

⁴ Ibid., p. 124.

⁵ Marcus W. Price, "Ships that Tested the Blockade of the Georgia and East Florida Ports," American Neptune 15 (April, 1955): 115; ORN I:12, p. 232.

⁶ Price, "Ships that Tested the Blockade," 101.

⁷ Joe A. Ackerman, JR., Florida Cowman: A History of Florida Cattle Raising (Kissimmee, Florida: 1976), p. 87.

⁸ Stanley L. Itkin, "Operations in the East Gulf Blockade of Florida 1862-1865" (Master's Thesis: Florida State University, 1962), p. 198.

⁹ Bern Anderson, By Sea and By River: The Naval History of the Civil War (New York: 1962), p. 218.

¹⁰ Price, "Ships that Tested the Blockade," 97.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ ORA I:6, pp. 75-76.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 76-77.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 129.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 100.

¹⁸ John D. Hayes, Samuel Francis DuPont: A Selection From His War letters (Ithaca: 1969), I, p. 366.

¹⁹ ORN I:12, p. 231.

²⁰ Price, "Ships that Tested the Blockade," 120.

²¹ Hayes, DuPont, I, p. 379-381.

- 22 Ibid., p. 383.
- 23 Price, "Ships that Tested the Blockade," 119.
- 24 ORA I:6, p. 263.
- 25 Ibid., p. 125.
- 26 Ibid., p. 251.
- 27 Hayes, DuPont, I, p. 374.
- 28 Ibid., II, p. 18.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Ibid., p. 69.
- 31 ORA I:6, p. 217.
- 32 Ibid., pp. 120-121, 127-143.
- 33 ORA I:14, p. 226.
- 34 Ibid., p. 845.
- 35 ORA III:3, pp. 116-117.
- 36 Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Army Life In A Black Regiment, 1870 rpt. (Williamston: 1971), p. 128.
- 37 ORA I:28, Pt.II, pp. 11-13.
- 38 Ibid., p. 13.
- 39 William J. Schellings, ed. "Blockade Duty On the Florida Coast, Excerpts From A Union Naval Officer's Diary," Tequesta 15 (1955): 71-72.
- 40 Ibid.

CHAPTER VII RENEWED INTEREST IN FLORIDA

As the course of the Civil War unfolded, Florida found itself relegated to a position of unimportance by both sides. Both the initial attempt to take Fort Pickens and the early emphasis on coastal defense were superseded in priority by events elsewhere. The Confederate setbacks in Kentucky and Tennessee required immediate reinforcement of that area to prevent disaster; the most available troops were engaged in coastal defense. Florida scraped the bottom of the barrel to provide at least her share of the needed troops and in the process found herself abandoned by the Confederacy and almost defenseless against the Federal blockade and raiding forces. The North, after insuring retention of Fort Pickens and control of the Florida Keys, picked up Fernandina and St. Augustine relatively cheaply and were thus able to establish a series of bases along the extended Florida coast for the blockading forces.

As far as the Union strategic planners were concerned, the Union's prime interest in relation to Florida was the establishment and tightening of the blockade. This was effectively achieved by the end of 1862. A series of raids by limited Federal land forces had been conducted with reasonable success, but no major land operation had been

envisioned in view of the expected paucity of results. Towards the end of 1863, however, a number of factors had developed to the point where a military operation having multiple objectives might be successfully and profitably conducted in Florida to the benefit of the Federal government. Major General Quincy A. Gillmore, commanding the Federal Department of the South, proposed such an undertaking. The initial objectives he listed in his request for permission to mount this expedition included opening the area to commercial exploitation, cutting off a source of commissary supplies for the Confederacy, preventing the Confederacy from removing rails from one area for use elsewhere, and recruiting blacks for the Federal Army. Later, he added the objective of restoring Florida to the Union. An examination of the development of military, economic, and political factors affecting Florida by late 1863 reveals strong reasons for renewed interest in Florida and sheds light on the immense potential the Federal expedition into Florida in early 1864 possessed.

After losing the opportunity for exploitation presented by the success of the Port Royal attack in November 1861, Federal forces in front of Charleston and Savannah had been stalemated for some time. By late 1863, the combination of the large numbers of troops involved in the siege of these two cities, the lack of tangible evidence of progress in this region to date with no expectation for a change in this

situation in the immediate future, the success of Federal forces elsewhere, the problems associated with troops in relatively static defensive positions for long periods of time, and the ambition of Federal leaders created a search for other opportunities within the Department of the South. The availability of naval transports provided the options of rapid transportation and surprise. Militarily, there were no targets available as important and as vulnerable as the railroad junctions and port cities of Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina had been in 1861. On the other hand, the series of raids conducted by Federal forces in Florida in 1862 and 1863 had revealed how poorly defended Florida was and how vulnerable she was to combined operations involving land and sea forces. From a purely military point of view, the most important objectives for a raid into Florida were recruitment of blacks for the Federal army, cutting off of the enemy's source of commissary supplies, and both disrupting the rail system and preventing the removal of parts of it to locations where it would be more useful to the Confederacy.

The Act of July 17, 1862, empowered the president of the United States to receive into the military and naval service "persons of African Descent."¹ Prior to that act, a number of experiments had been made in various parts of the country using blacks as Federal soldiers which had met with both approval and criticism. After the act legitimized these

efforts, wide scale recruitment and employment of black soldiers took place. By the end of the war, some 178,975 black troops were in Federal service; 99,337 were recruited from Confederate states, to include 1,044 from Florida, roughly one-tenth of the black adult male population of that state.² This figure may be even higher because of the practice of assigning recruits gathered on a raid in a state such as Florida to established colored regiments from the north such as the 51st Massachusetts or ones formed within the Department of the South such as the 1st or 2nd South Carolina. In the Union's Department of the South, success of recruitment of blacks by black units was evidenced as early as November 1862, when an expedition commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Oliver T. Beard along the coasts of Georgia and East Florida left St. Simon's "with sixty-two colored and returned to Beaufort with 156 fighting men(all colored)."³ Beard explained the process as pure simplicity, "As soon as we took a slave from his claimant, we placed a musket in his hand and he began to fight for the freedom of others."⁴ The expedition succeeded in also destroying about \$20,000 worth of horses, wagons, rice, corn and other Confederate property and brought off, in addition to the recruits, sixty-one women and children.⁵

These first troops in the Department of the South were formed into the 1st South Carolina Volunteers, the first organized black regiment in the Union Army, command

eventually given to Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, an abolitionist and old friend of John Brown's. On January 23, 1862, Colonel Higginson and his regiment were given a mission of raiding up the St. Marys River for the twin purposes of recruitment of blacks and seizure of lumber. Two hundred and fifty bars of railroad iron, 40,000 bricks, some lumber, a flock of sheep, and some contrabands were brought back.⁶ This raid was followed by a second one led by Colonel Higginson in March 1863. His forces this time included both the 1st and 2nd South Carolina Volunteer Negro regiments. The 2nd South Carolina was commanded by Colonel James Montgomery who had achieved some attention fighting on the side of the free soil forces in Kansas. The regiment was short of troops and while Colonel Montgomery had recruited some blacks from Fernandina in February, most that were available had already joined the 1st South Carolina. A trip to Key West netted him 130 volunteers.⁷ It was hoped that he could get more in the area of the St. Johns. General Saxton believed that Jacksonville would be a center to which the numerous blacks in the area would flock. The intent of the expedition was not lost upon Confederate General Finegan commanding East Florida who reported:

The object is to hold the town of Jacksonville and to advance up the St. Johns and establish another position higher up the river, whence they may entice away the slaves. That the entire negro population of East Florida will be lost and the country ruined there cannot be a doubt unless the means of holding the St. Johns are immediately supplied. . . . The entire planting interests of East Florida lie within easy

connection of the river; . . . intercourse will immediately commence between negroes on the plantation and those in the enemy's service: . . . and this intercourse will be conducted through swamps and under cover of night, and cannot be prevented. A few weeks will suffice to corrupt the entire slave population of East Florida.⁸

General Rufus Saxton, reporting on the effect of the raid to Secretary of War Stanton stated, "It is my belief that scarcely an incident in this war has caused greater panic throughout the whole Southern coast than this raid of colored troops in Florida."⁹ While the results of both expeditions in terms of numbers of blacks recruited for Federal service was not impressive, its effect on the local residents impacted tremendously. Slaveholders withdrew into the interior of the state with their slaves. Confederate Captain John J. Dickison was ordered to remove into the interior all free Negroes and any without apparent owners.¹⁰ The ever present fear of a slave insurrection was fueled, and this fear spread throughout the lower South.¹¹ From the Federal point of view, these raids by black troops were highly effective and they continued for the remainder of the war. At the same time, examples of the bravery exhibited by black units at such battles as Port Hudson and Battery Wagner convinced skeptics of the fighting abilities of blacks. In January 1864, General Q. A. Gillmore requested General Halleck to send to the Department of the South some of the new colored units being formed to "garrison the posts from which I draw the troops" for the expedition into

Florida.¹² It would appear that at this time General Gillmore had been planning to use seasoned troops in his operation. The request for colored troops was denied as the needs of the Department of the Gulf were more pressing for the new units. However, in talking about the object of General Gillmore's proposed expedition, General Halleck wrote:

If it is expected to give an outlet for cotton, or open a favorable field for the enlistment of colored troops, the advantage may be sufficient to justify the expense in money and troops.¹³

General Gillmore had also requested permission to consolidate his colored regiments such as the South Carolina Regiments and designate them as "United States Colored Troops" because the men in the units were drawn from different states and he felt that this interfered with recruiting in Florida and Georgia.¹⁴ On December 22, 1863, General Halleck granted this permission in a letter that also informed General Gillmore that no reinforcements were available to his department.¹⁵ In the instructions that were forwarded to General Gillmore in relation to black troops were the authority:

To enlist and organize all the colored troops that can be recruited within his department . . . to procure recruits from Key West, or in the States of Georgia, Florida, and Alabama . . .¹⁶

General Gillmore was further authorized to appoint boards of examination for officers for these black units, determine the organization of these units in terms of arms,

such as infantry, cavalry, or artillery, and to determine their organization by size such as regiment, brigade, and division. Finally, all units thus recruited and organized were to be designated "United States" troops.¹⁷ Florida was a place that held the possibility for General Gillmore to recruit for his own black regiments; General Gillmore's superiors considered such recruitment an appropriate objective. According to Governor Milton, there were 16,000 slaves in East and South Florida¹⁸ In Middle Florida there were some 40,000.¹⁹ Prospects for achievement of this objective in early 1864 seemed good.

On September 14, 1861, the president of the Pensacola and Georgia Railroad wrote a letter to the Confederate secretary of war in which he pointed out the strategic importance of building a connecting rail link between the Pensacola and Georgia line in Florida with the Savannah, Albany, and Gulf line in Georgia.²⁰ When completed, the Confederacy would have rail connection between Savannah on the Atlantic and with either Cedar Key or St. Mark's by way of Tallahassee on the Gulf. The letter informed that the Pensacola and Georgia had under contract and ready for track-laying that portion of the connection running from its line to the Georgia border and requested money from the Confederacy to buy the needed iron for the track which was available in Savannah. Shortly after the eastern part of Florida had been added to General Beauregard's command, he

had called the attention of the Confederate War Department to the gap that existed between the rail systems of Georgia and Florida as an obstacle in the way of rapid concentration of forces.²¹ By February 1862, Union forces held or controlled both ends of the Florida Railroad Company which ran from Fernandina to Cedar Key. In March of that year, the Confederate army received orders to take the Florida Railroad Company rails and those of another line and use them to build a new strategic junction that would link the Georgia and Florida rail systems.²² This move had Governor Milton's support, but the efforts to remove the rails were stymied by part-owner of the road former Senator David Yulee, who put private financial interest over southern patriotism. A number of letters were written by Governor Milton to such people as General Finegan, General Beauregard, and Secretary of War Seddon to get Yulee to allow the removal of the rail but to no avail. In his letter to Secretary Seddon, Governor Milton said:

Shall what is necessary to the defense of Florida be ordered agreeably to the views expressed by those highest in authority and to whom the welfare of the State has been decided, or shall the State be left defenseless, in complement to Mr. Yulee's and Gen. Finegan's opinions.²³

Secretary Seddon and General Beauregard both backed off of making a decision that would have assisted Governor Milton. Meanwhile, David L. Yulee resorted to a state circuit court in obtaining an injunction to prevent the army from removing the rails.²⁴ This caused a delay in the removal of the

rails, and the connecting link was not completed until 1865. At the end of 1863, although the Union held or controlled the various coastal railroad terminals in the state, the internal rail transportation was being used by southern forces to move men and materials around. Key points in this system were the rail junction town of Baldwin and the various towns along the right-of-way that were used as collection points by southern commissary agents. Additionally, of military interest would be the railway bridge on the Pensacola and Georgia line that crossed the Suwannee River west of Lake City and, if it were finished, the proposed railway bridge on the connector line north of Live Oak that headed toward the Georgia state line. Destruction of the bridge west of Lake City would disrupt lines of communication between east and middle Florida; destruction of a bridge built on the connector line would continue the presence of that gap between the Georgia and Florida rail systems as an obstacle to Confederate communications between Florida and Georgia.

One additional matter in relation to Florida railway systems and motivation for a Federal expedition into Florida should be discussed. While David L. Yulee was the principal southern stockholder in the Florida Railroad Company, northern investors owned the majority of the shares of stock. With the commencement of war, Yulee was in complete control as Confederate legislation made his northern partners enemy aliens.²⁵ The chief northern stockholder, Marshall O.

Roberts, joined together with Eli Thayer who was planning an emigration movement to Florida similar to the one he had organized to the Kansas territory. Thayer hoped to settle parts of Florida with 20,000 volunteers who would wrest Florida away from the Confederacy. Both Thayer and Roberts were interested in Union occupation of the northern portion of Florida; Thayer for settlement purposes and Roberts to regain control over the Florida Railroad Company. Important to Roberts were two confiscation acts the Federal Congress had passed which made various classes of Confederate property subject to seizure by the United States government.²⁶ The two men combined to put pressure on the Federal government to occupy parts of Florida. The passage of the Direct Tax Act was a double edged-sword because of the dual nature of the ownership of the railroad. Failure to pay taxes on it could result in confiscation by the Federal government. Roberts and the other New Yorkers hired L. D. Stickney, a Federal tax commissioner, who was to pay the taxes on the railroad and look out for their interests. Simply stated, L. D. Stickney's primary interest was L. D. Stickney. Stickney made arrangements to sell the iron he was supposed to protect in New York, and he also failed to pay taxes on their property as he was hired to do which resulted in the sale of their property to other parties.²⁷

By the end of 1863, Roberts and his associates were putting pressure on the Federal government to protect the

rest of the railroad. At the same time, Yulee was trying to prevent the Confederate government from using its power to confiscate needed war materials to remove the rails of the Florida Railroad Company from Florida, even if this was detrimental to the southern war effort. Both northern and southern groups of investors tried to influence the military strategy of their governments, feared the destruction of their property by troops, and faced loss of their investment if their enemy's forces held the railroad.²⁸

In late 1863, seizure of the Florida rail system was a valid military objective for a Federal expedition. Taking the system would paralyze internal transportation, disrupt communications between east and west Florida, fragment the military forces within Florida, interrupt shipment of commissary supplies to the Confederacy, protect northern commercial interests, and prevent the Confederacy from removing scarce and desperately needed rolling stock and rails to more strategic locations within the Confederacy. Approach to within a short distance of the key rail junction of Baldwin could be done by water by way of both the St. Johns and St. Marys rivers while other portions of the system could be reached within a short time by mobile forces. Any reinforcement by Confederate forces would require time because of the nature of transportation in that part of the country. The number and dispersement of the Confederate forces in Florida at the end of 1863 did not present much of

a expected problem in the form of resistance to such an undertaking. Use of the lines by the Federal force would be greatly facilitated by seizure of whatever locomotives and rolling stock were currently in existence.

The Union successes in the spring of 1862 were devastating to the Confederate war effort. The blockade tightened, depriving the Confederacy of most of its coasts and harbors; the border areas and the Mississippi Valley were wrenched away. A large area of the Confederacy became a no-man's land subject to sporadic destruction. The "bread-basket" areas from which the Confederacy could draw provisions were sharply reduced and, with minor changes, the Confederacy operated within these limits for the next two years (Figure 7-1.)²⁹ "The privations of the Confederate armed services in subsequent months and years stemmed in large parts from the defeats in the Spring of 1862."³⁰ In the summer of 1863, supplies from Texas were cut off when the Mississippi came under Federal control. As the principal sources of meat at this time were either occupied by the Federals or cut off by them, the Confederacy increasingly turned to Florida as the best source remaining.³¹

Complicating the matter of commissary supplies for the Confederacy was transportation. One student of Civil War logistics wrote, "By the end of 1863, there was no room except at intervals for anything but government freight on the main lines. Since Virginia and North Carolina had been

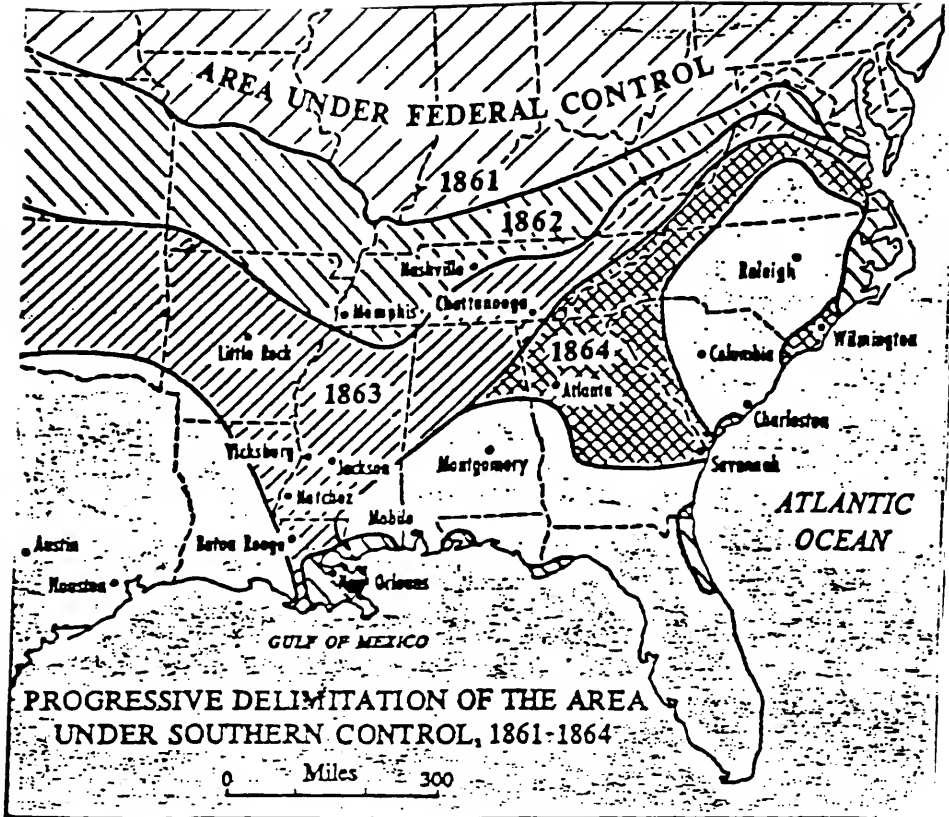


Figure 7-1. Progressive Delimitation of the Area Under Federal Control, 1861-1864. Source: Gates, p. 126 (reprinted by permission of the publisher).

stripped bare of provisions, General Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was now being supplied from South Carolina and Georgia and the roads to the South of Richmond were being overworked."³² Starting with the winter of 1863-1864, General Lee's army, at the end of a 500 to nearly 1,000 mile supply pipeline from south Georgia through South Carolina, barely had more than two or three day's supply of food on hand. A surplus could not be accumulated and with time, supply on hand became even scantier. By the end of the summer of 1864, the railroads, even if working at full capacity and unhampered by Federal operations, could not bring up enough supplies to feed the men and horses half rations.³³ If he had the time and the patience, General Grant might have won in Virginia by just sitting back and letting Lee try to maintain his army logistically in the field. According to Charles W. Ramsdell, the problem, however, was not lack of food; there were adequate supplies in Georgia, Alabama, and Florida. The basic fact was that the rail system simply could not carry enough of it. "When this region was cut off and the remnant of the feeble roads wrecked by General Sherman's destructive march through Georgia and the Carolinas, the stoppage of all supplies followed and the long struggle was over."³⁴

The commissary supplies available might not have been as plentiful as Ramsdell suggested. By August 1864, the Confederate secretary of war was desperately calling for the

farmers of South Carolina and Georgia to furnish supplies, particularly corn and forage, because those commodities had been exhausted in North Carolina and Virginia. In October of that year, it was reported to Colonel L. B. Northrop, the Confederate commissary general, that the whole Confederacy was "completely exhausted of supplies" with only enough meat rations for a few days and there were forty-eight days until the new big crop.³⁵ North Carolina had been sending its surplus to Virginia while the surplus of Alabama, Georgia, and Florida had been designated for Bragg's army in Tennessee and Beauregard's men on the Atlantic coast.³⁶

As early as October 1862, after a raid up the St. Johns River, Federal Navy Commander Maxwell Woodhull reported:

The cattle of Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, and South Carolina have all been consumed. Texas and the rich grazing country to the westward of the Mississippi being cut off, the whole dependence of the Confederate government to feed their army now rests on this state [Florida]. I have it from reliable sources that its agents are all over the state buying up all the cattle obtainable, paying any price so that they can get the animals. The only dependence the people of Georgia and Florida have for their sugar is that raised along the banks of this river [St. Johns]. The greatest blow of this war would be the entire destruction of the sugar crop and the small salt-works along the shore on the coast of this State.³⁷

On December 23, 1863, Federal Brigadier General D. P. Woodbury, commanding the District of Key West and Tortugas, included the following note in a letter to his parent headquarters, the Department of the Gulf:

Two thousand head of cattle are reported to be driven out of Florida every week for the rebel armies.

Probably half of these are driven from Middle and Lower Florida.³⁸

General Woodbury enclosed an extract from an article entitled "Instructions to commissary officers and agents" taken from a November 7 issue of a Florida newspaper (unidentified) that read:

The utmost promptness, energy, and industry are required of every agent and his assistants to secure all the surplus supplies of the country; otherwise the armies in the field cannot be fed. As Florida is now, next to Georgia, the most productive State remaining to the Confederacy, much depends upon the activity of the Government agents within her bounds.³⁹

The endorsement to this letter by the commander of the Federal Department of the Gulf, Major General N. P. Banks, contained the observation, "If the supply of beef in Florida be of importance to our army, a force should be sent there sufficiently large to scour the country."⁴⁰

There was no doubt that by the end of 1863, Florida was economically more important to the Confederacy than it had been in 1861. Confederate General John J. Jackson wrote to General Cooper in 1864:

The most valuable portion of Florida is the middle counties of the Peninsula--Alachua, Marion, and other counties in that vicinity. Its productive capacity is very great and the character of its supplies is of inestimable value to the Confederacy. The sugar and syrup there produced cannot, I believe, be supplied by any other portion of the Confederacy. From official and other data I learn that the product of army supplies will amount annually to 25,000 head of beeves, equal to 10,000,000 pounds; 1,000 hogsheads of sugar; 100,000 gallons of syrup, equal by exchange to 4,000,000 pounds of bacon; 10,000 hogs equal to 1,000,000 pounds of bacon; 50,000 sides of leather; 100,000 barrels of fish (if labor afforded), equal to 20,000,000 pounds of fish. Oranges, lemons, arrow-

root, salt blockade goods, iron, etc. Counting the bacon at one-third pound and beef and fish at one pound to the ration, there are of meat rations 45,000,000--enough to supply 250,000 for six months.⁴¹

The number of cattle in Florida has never been clearly established. In October 1862, the state comptroller reported to the governor that the number of cattle in Florida was as follows: in east Florida, 383,717, in central Florida, 174,378, and in west Florida, 100,514, for a total of 658,609.⁴² While these figures are much greater than those reported in the Eighth Census, William Watson Davis believes they were taken from 1860-1861 returns and were actually much under the figures for 1863 as large droves had been driven from Georgia into Florida.⁴³ One piece of evidence of the number of cattle collected for the Confederacy that does exist is a summary statement of commissary stores made out by Major A. G. Sumner who headed the commissary district headquartered at Long Swamp, Florida. His statement shows a purchase of a total of 10,142 head of cattle for his district for the year ending December 31, 1863.⁴⁴

While there is question about the numbers of cattle, there was no question about the need for the cattle. The first cattle herds obtained by the Confederate government were those found in the northern part of the state near the railheads and the various population centers. As these sources became exhausted, attention turned to middle and south Florida. The Confederate commissary officer in Florida, Major P. W. White, reported in 1863 to Governor

Milton that "we are now collecting by detailed men nearly all of the cattle now supplied our armies . . . three-fourths of the Beef Cattle are now furnished from Manatee and Brevard Counties."⁴⁵ One of the pioneer Florida cattlemen, Jacob Summerlin, Jr., whose herds were reported to range from Fort Meade to the Caloosahatchee River, is credited with furnishing the Confederacy with some 25,000 head of cattle in the first two years of the war for which he was never paid.⁴⁶ The cattle from the wire grass prairies of the Caloosahatchee, the Myakka, the Peace, and the Kissimmee rivers followed the old military trails or cut new trails as they were driven northward through Fort Meade, Bartow, and Brooksville to Payne's Prairie near Gainesville and from there to the railhead at Baldwin. The cattle drives averaged some fifteen to twenty miles a day and the trip normally took about forty days.⁴⁷ From Baldwin the cattle were shipped to Georgia and South Carolina. Some cattle were driven to holding pens along the railroad at places like Madison, Stockton, and Sanderson, while others were driven directly to Savannah by way of Trader's Hill.⁴⁸ One estimate supported General Woodbury's claim that as many as 2,000 cattle a week were coming to the Confederate Army off the Florida ranges.⁴⁹ As late as October 3, 1864, Major H. C. Guerin sent a telegram to Major Pleasant W. White from Charleston stating that General H. J. Hardee wanted 3,000 head of cattle per month.⁵⁰

Concerned about an interruption in the shipment of beef to his army, General Beauregard's commissary officer sent an agent to investigate the cause of the delay. The report submitted by Major C. McClenaghan to Major Guerin dated October 29, 1863, is illuminating in terms of the problems of shipping beef from Florida.⁵¹ It was reported that the reason was not, as had been supposed, the presence of commissary agents from General Bragg's army competing for the beef, but local conditions. It was noted, however, that General Bragg's requisitions were twice as many as General Beauregard's and Florida was sending one-third of their shipments to Charleston and two-thirds to Atlanta. Other local problems delaying shipment included the time of the year because the cattle were spread out and not in large herds, the scarcity of drovers, and the high level of ground water which made driving cattle difficult. Additionally, there was the increasing difficulty of finding adequate grazing land along the routes over which the cattle had been driven because the grass along the way had either been damaged or consumed. Problems of pasturage would be further aggravated in the winter months because of expected damage to the grass from frost which would result in further delays. Looking at possible solutions to this problem, the writer of the report believed that if modifications were made in the rail system, time could be cut off that now consumed in the driving of the cattle 175 or 200 miles. He suggested using

the rail from the Fernandina and Cedar Key line (Florida Railroad Company) running north from Baldwin to complete the connection from Live Oak to No. 12 on the Savannah, Albany, and Gulf line in Georgia. He wrote, "This road is already graded, and the cross-ties are on the ground, so all that is required is the iron, and I am informed practical civil engineers say that the road can be put in running order in six weeks, if they had the iron."⁵² Cattle could then be driven within thirty miles of Gainesville over frost-free land and it would then be but sixty hours by freight to Charleston. In addition to reporting on the delay in the shipment of beef, Major McClenaghan called his superior's attention to the sugar cane that was grown in south and east Florida estimating that some 700,000 pounds of sugar and large quantities of syrup and molasses could be made available.⁵³

In November 1863, Florida's chief Confederate commissary officer, Major P. W. White, put out what was meant to be a confidential circular. It contained an appeal to the citizens of Florida to contribute as much as possible of their food products because they were desperately needed by the Confederacy. To support his request, he included in the circular portions of letters he had recently received from other Confederate commissary officers who were relying upon Florida for their supplies. General Bragg's commissary officer, Major J. F. Cummings called for all the cattle

Florida could immediately send. When this was not quickly received, he wrote again on October 5, 1863, "All other resources are exhausted . . . we are now dependent on your State for beef for the very large army of General Bragg." Major M. B. Millen, the chief commissary officer for Georgia wrote from Savannah on October 10, 1863, "Starvation stares the Army in the face . . . I have exhausted the beef-cattle, and am now obliged to kill stock cattle." Major H. C. Guerin, South Carolina's chief commissary officer wrote, "We are almost entirely dependent upon Florida, our situation is full of danger from the want of meat."⁵⁴

The plea to keep the circular confidential was not kept, and it ended up being posted on trees, posts, and at crossroads all over the state. It was in evidence in Lake City in early January 1864, and a copy was picked up by Federal troops at Baldwin in early February. It subsequently was printed in its entirety in the February 20, 1864, issue of the New York Herald.⁵⁵ While sometimes suggested as a possible reason for the Federal expedition in 1864, none of the Federal commanders seems to have mentioned it. General Beauregard stated, "The paper needs no comment I am assured it was one of the main causes of the expedition to Jacksonville and thence towards Lake City."⁵⁶ In March 1864, after the battle of Olustee, when Confederate General J. Patton Anderson assumed command of the Confederate forces in eastern Florida, one of the first things he did was

request a copy of Major White's circular.⁵⁷ In view of the dependency of the Confederacy upon Florida as a significant source of commissary supplies, any interruption of the shipment of those supplies would have an almost immediate negative effect on the Confederacy. This effect would particularly be felt in General Bragg's and General Beauregard's armies. One of Federal General Gillmore's objectives for the proposed expedition was to cut off those commissary supplies emanating from Florida.

The year 1864 was a presidential election year and the Republican party was composed of two basic factions, Conservative and Radical, differentiated by attitude toward the seceded South. Whoever won this election, it was assumed, would prosecute the war to its successful conclusion and dominate the reconstruction of the South. As 1863 came to a close, the two men most mentioned for the Republican nomination were Abraham Lincoln, the incumbent, and Salmon P. Chase, his secretary of the treasury. Chase needed to build a political base, and one area where he could make progress towards that end was in Florida; the means by which he could do so was the Direct Tax Law of 1862. This act provided for the appointment of Direct Tax Commissioners who were to assess real property in rebellious areas, advertise the taxes due, and then sell at public auction the property of delinquent owners.⁵⁸ The Tax Commissioners could only function in Federally-occupied territory, and so a major

objective of Chase and his agents was to extend the control of Federal armies wherever it was possible. One of those areas was Florida, and Chase was aided and abetted in this endeavor by the men he appointed as Direct Tax commissioners in Florida in September 1862. These included Harrison Reed, later governor of Florida during Reconstruction, John S. Sammis, a local businessman who had been forced to leave Florida because of Union sympathies, and Lyman D. Stickney, the opportunist. From the beginning, Stickney was aware of the ambitions of the secretary of the treasury and he knew he stood to profit from any success Chase achieved.

The question of how possible it would have been for Florida to have been split off from the Confederacy and returned to the Union was addressed some years after the war by former Confederate General Samuel Cooper:

Florida appeared to offer better prospects of success in such an undertaking than any other Southern State. Its great extent of coastline and its intersection by a broad and deep river, navigable by vessels of war, exposed a great part of the State to the control of Union forces whenever it should be thought desirable to occupy it. The exigencies of the Confederate service had in a great measure stripped Florida of troops. If a column of Union troops could penetrate the country westward from Jacksonville, occupy a point in the interior, and break up communications between east, middle, and west Florida by the destruction of the railroad and bridges about the Suwannee River, the Southern Confederacy would not only be deprived of a large quantity of the food drawn from east and south Florida, but a point d'appui would be established for any of the inhabitants who might be disposed to attempt the organization of a State acknowledging allegiance to the United States.⁵⁹

L. D. Stickney's initial attempt to become a political power in a rapid political reconstruction of Florida by a rump government of Florida Unionists brought him into contact with Eli Thayer and that gentleman's plan to settle Florida through a mass migration of "free labor" from the North. In September 1863, Eli Thayer presented a proposal to Abraham Lincoln that called for a new military Department, the Department of Florida, with himself as military governor and Brigadier General James A. Garfield as commander of a 30,000 man Federal army.⁶⁰ Allied to the idea was the use of the blacks currently in Florida to protect his soldier-colonists and using portions of Florida as a refuge for freedmen. Stickney's interest was in the advantages that would accrue to him as a Tax Commissioner in a Federally-occupied Florida. Thayer's plan to settle Florida with blacks and northern volunteers met rejection from President Lincoln and Secretary Stanton, and he was unable to get much support in either the House of Representatives or the Senate. In the later years of the war, it was all but forgotten. Extension of Federal control over Florida would have to come by other means.

In September 1863, Stickney travelled to Washington and had a meeting with Chase. Stickney stated that the pressing need was for military conquest and informed Chase that this could be done by 5,000 troops and that the commander of the Department of the South, Major General Gillmore, was favorable to the idea of a Florida

expedition.⁶¹ Further, Stickney was looking to get a brigadier general's commission for Colonel H. C. Plaisted, the commander of the Federal forces at Fernandina (Stickney's base of operations), and a separate military department for Stickney's friend General Rufus Saxton, who was with the Department of the South. The suggestion was that these arrangements would give the Chase forces a tighter grip on the state.⁶² In December, Stickney wrote Chase of a long talk he had with General Gillmore who was agreeable to helping making Florida a free state. Stickney continued:

I think it very important indeed for you that Gen'l Gillmore be identified with the Florida conquest. He is anxious to win distinction according to the Republican programme. At the same time, I do not think the Senate ought to be in a hurry to confirm him as a Maj-General. Wait until the Delegation in Congress from Florida ask his confirmation for his services in conquering the rebels of their state.⁶³

President Lincoln issued his Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction on December 8, 1863. This proclamation stated that in any seceded state, if 10 percent of the number of voters of that state who had voted in 1860 took an oath of loyalty to the United States, the president would recognize a newly created state government. Stickney staged a "Union meeting" in St. Augustine on December 19, 1863, in order to lay the foundation for a Chase organization in Florida that would be ready to take advantage of the expected imminent military conquest. In fairness to Chase who appears to have been used by Stickney, Florida was not of major importance to him. Chase was interested in restoring the Union and in

stamping out slavery; it was easy to believe the many reports that Stickney and his associates kept sending him reporting on the large numbers of Floridians ready to rejoin the Union.

Certain resolutions made at that St. Augustine meeting were not in keeping with Lincoln's Amnesty Proclamation. Nevertheless, L. D. Stickney wrote John Hay, Lincoln's personal secretary, after the meeting and claimed that the meeting had been in response to Lincoln's Proclamation. He then asked John Hay to come down to Florida and be the state's representative in Congress.⁶⁴ John Hay discussed the matter with President Lincoln who appointed Hay a commissioner with instructions to "go to Florida and engineer the business there."⁶⁵ L. D. Stickney had anticipated President Lincoln's interest in Florida and appeared to be hedging his bets by playing for both sides. At the same time, Lincoln undoubtedly was aware of Stickney's connection with Chase and had confidence in Hay's ability to handle Stickney.

On December 15, 1863, General Gillmore suggested a Florida expedition and gave as his objectives recovering the most valuable portion of the state, cutting off a rich source of the enemy's supplies, and recruitment of colored troops.⁶⁶ No mention was made of any political objectives. On January 13, 1864, President Lincoln wrote to General Gillmore:

I understand an effort is being made by some worthy gentlemen to reconstruct a loyal State government in Florida. Florida is in your department and it is not unlikely that you may be there in person.

I have given Mr. Hay a commission of Major and sent him to you with some blank books and other blanks to aid in the reconstruction. He will explain as to the manner of using the blanks, and also my general views on the subject. It is desirable for all to cooperate; but if irreconcilable differences of opinion should arise, you are the master. I wish the thing done in the most speedy way possible, so that when done it will be within the late proclamation on the subject. The detail labor, of course, will have to be done by others, but I shall be greatly obliged if you will give it such general supervision as you can find convenient with your other more strictly military duties.⁶⁷

President Lincoln's letter was the basis for many later misconceptions regarding the Olustee campaign. It contained no extraordinary request for a change in Gillmore's plans, and, in fact, did not even mention any proposed military operations in Florida. One may even get an overall impression that the reconstruction was to take place in areas already under Federal control. In his reply to this letter, Gillmore clearly indicated that he understood that his future duties would include an increased emphasis on reconstruction:

I am led to the impression . . . I am expected to initiate, guide, and control such measures as may be necessary under the Presidential Proclamation of December 8, 1863 to restore the State of Florida to its allegiance The plan now being pursued by General Banks in Louisiana impresses me very favorable, and can doubtless in its principal features be both easily and speedily applied to Florida.⁶⁸

When John Hay recorded his January 20 arrival at General Gillmore's Headquarters at Hilton Head, South Carolina, he wrote that the General:

seemed perplexed rather & evidently thought he was expected to undertake some immediate military operations to effect the occupation and reconstruction. . . . I told him that it was not the President's intention to do anything to embarrass his military

operations--that all I wished from him was an order directing me to go to Florida & open my books of record for the oaths, as preliminary to future proceedings.⁶⁹

General Halleck had written to General Gillmore after Gillmore had presented his original proposal for a Florida expedition and alluded to the fact that the objective of that expedition had not been fully explained.⁷⁰ General Gillmore replied to General Halleck after a week's delay with the following letter dated Januray 31, 1864.

^f In reply to your letter of the 22nd instant I beg leave to state that the objects and advantages to be secured by the occupation of that portion of Floride within my reach, viz, the richest portions between the Suwannee and Saint John's Rivers, are: First. To procure an outlet for cotton, lumber, timber, turpentine, and the other products of the State. Second. To cut off one of the enemy's sources of commissary supplies. He now draws largely upon the herds of Florida for his beef, and is making preparations to take up a portion of the Fernandina and Saint Mark's Railroad for the purpose of connecting the road from Jacksonville to Tallahassee with Thomasville on the Savannah, Albany and Gulf Railroad. Third. To obtain recruits for my colored regiments. Fourth. To inaugurate measures for the speedy restoration of Florida to her allegiance, in accordance with instructions which I have received from the President by the hands of Maj. John Hay, assistant adjutant-general.⁷¹

In this letter, General Gillmore had added a political objective, the restoration of the state to the Union, and an economic objective, the opening of a port in Florida, to his objectives in the original request for permission.

At the end of 1863, the restoration of Florida to the Union was a distinct possibility. As early as 1862, the president had appointed military governors in the states of North Carolina, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Arkansas. Louisiana

had even gone so far as to elect representatives to Congress and they had been seated.⁷² There had been considerable evidence of loyalty to the Union given by residents of the Federally occupied St. Augustine, Key West, Fernandina, and, until the first Federal evacuation, Jacksonville. It was highly probable the required loyalty oaths could be obtained from enough Floridians if they were assured of protection.

One of General Gillmore's objectives for the Florida expedition had been the opening of an outlet for Florida's commercial produce. Port Royal had been made a partially open port on June 1, 1862, but the blockade continued for other ports in the Department of the South until Fernandina was opened, December 1, 1864. The administration of the trade and blockade regulations was under army control until May 1863, when it was turned over to the Treasury Department. Goods were not prevented from getting into Florida by the treasury "blockade"; the problem was for Florida to export its products which would help revive the civilian economy and keep the local residents from becoming dependent upon the military. Under Treasury regulations, products for export had to be brought to Port Royal first. This practice wrecked the economy of those parts of Florida held by Union forces.⁷³ The only real hope for the Department of the South was to open a port in Florida to help its economy; it was this that General Gillmore proposed to do as one of the objectives for his expedition.

General Banks's combination of military and economic success in Louisiana was common knowledge. When the army controlled trade it allowed sutlers to be post traders and it licensed other traders. After the treasury department took over, sufficient cargoes came in as "military necessities."⁷³ Colonel Plaisted, the Union commander in Fernandina, had been recommended for promotion by treasury department Direct Tax Commissioner, L. D. Stickney. Stickney and Plaisted had been to see General Saxton, and they worked out a plan of action. If a separate department was created, it was their intention to name Stickney's partner in Fernandina, William C. Morrill, as post sutler. Morrill, who had originally come to Florida as a musician with the 9th Maine, would then be the only one who could bring goods to Amelia Island, and all other traders and regimental sutlers would have to buy from him.⁷⁴ Suffice to say that there were enough "carpetbaggers" like Stickney and his partners around to insure cooperative military leaders would profit from the exploitation of areas controlled by the Federal government.

By the end of 1863, there was sufficient reason for the Federal government to take an interest in Florida. It was a source of recruits for the colored regiments in the Department of the South. It was also a major source of commissary supplies for the Confederacy, the Confederacy planned to move scarce rails from the area to more strategic locations, there was a strong possibility Florida could be

severed from the Confederacy and restored to the Union, and a port in Florida might be opened to alleviate both the local economy and enhance certain people in the right positions. Troops were available, transportation was available, the area was vulnerable, and a minimum risk had good prospect of returning a maximum gain. In the zero-sum game of warfare, one side's gain is the other side's loss.

Notes

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² Ibid., p. 140; William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 224.

³ Dudley Cornish, The Sable Arm: Negro Troops In The Union Army, 1861-1865 1956 facsimile ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966), p. 86.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Higginson, Army Life, pp. 76-77.

⁷ Cornish, The Sable Arm, p. 138.

⁸ ORA I:14, p. 226.

⁹ Ibid., p. 423.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 661.

¹¹ Cornish, The Sable Arm, p. 138.

¹² ORA I:35 Pt.I, p. 278.

¹³ Ibid., p. 279.

- 14 ORA I:28 Pt.II, pp. 128-129.
- 15 Ibid., p. 134.
- 16 Ibid., p. 135.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 ORA I:53, pp. 260-261.
- 19 Eighth Census, pp. 60-61.
- 20 ORA IV:I, pp. 612-613.
- 21 Alfred Roman, The Military Operations of General Beauregard in the War Between the States (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1955), p. 26.
- 22 ORA I:53, p. 650.
- 23 Governor John Milton to Secretary of War Seddon, July 20, 1863, John Milton Letterbook, 1861-1863, Florida Historical Society Library, University of South Florida, Tampa. pp. 651-653.
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- 25 Robert L. Clarke, "The Florida Railroad Company in the Civil War," Journal of Southern History 19 (May, 1953): 180.
- 26 Ibid., 184.
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- 37 ORN I:13, p. 369.
- 38 ORA I:26, Pt. I, p. 873.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ibid., p. 874.
- 41 ORA I:35, Pt.II, p. 606.
- 42 Memroranda of Comptroller, October 10, 1862, Milton Papers, Florida State Library, Tallahassee.
- 43 William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 270.
- 44 Major A. G.Sumner to Major Pleasant W. White, December 31, 1863, Pleasant W. White Papers, Florida Historical Society Library.
- 45 John Milton. Letterbook. November 27, 1863 - March 21, 1865, Vol. 7 Ser.32, Florida State Library, Tallahassee.
- 46 Ackerman, Florida Cowman, p. 84.
- 47 Ibid., p. 85.
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- 49 Ibid., p. 88.
- 50 Major H. C.Guerin to Major Pleasant W. White, October 3, 1864, Pleasant W. White Papers, Florida Historical Society Library.
- 51 ORA I:28, Pt. II, pp. 459-462.
- 52 Ibid., p. 461.
- 53 Ibid., p. 462.
- 54 Ibid., pp. 472-473.
- 55 New York Herald, February 20, 1864.
- 56 ORA I:35, Pt.II, p. 294.
- 57 Ibid., p. 351.

⁵⁸Ovid L. Futch, "Salmon P. Chase and Civil War Politics in Florida," Florida Historical Quarterly 32 (January, 1954): 163.

⁵⁹ Samuel Jones, "The Battle of Olustee," Robert U. Johnson and Clarence C. Buell, eds. Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, IV, (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1888), p. 76.

⁶⁰ George Winston Smith, "Carpetbag Imperialism in Florida, 1862-1868," Florida Historical Quarterly 17 (October, 1948; 99-130, (January, 1948): 259-99.

⁶¹Futch, "Samon P. Chase," 169-170.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ L.D. Stickney to Chase, December 11, 1863. Salmon Portland Chase, Inside Lincoln's Cabinet: The Civil War Diaries of Salmon P. Chase ed. David Herbert Donald. (New York: Longmans, Green, 1954), p. 190

⁶⁴Tyler Dennett. Lincoln and the Civil War in the Diaries and Letters of John Hay (New York, Dodd. Mead and Company: 1939), pp. 145-149.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ ORA I:28, Pt.II, p. 129.

⁶⁷ ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 278.

⁶⁸ Gillmore to Lincoln, January 21, 1864. Lincoln MSS, Vols. 139, 140, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, S. Rep. No. 47, 38th Congress, 1st Session, p. 2 cited by Smith, "Carpetbag Imperialism," 281.

⁶⁹ Carl Sandburg. Abraham Lincoln: The War Years 4 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1939), III, p. 6.

⁷⁰ ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 279.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 273.

⁷³ George Linton Hendricks, "Union Army Occupation of the Southern Seaboard, 1861-1865" (Ph.D diss. Columbia University, 1954), p. 225.

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CHAPTER VIII
PRELIMINARIES, LANDING, AND EXPLOITATION

On February 4, 1864, General Quincy A. Gillmore issued orders to General Truman Seymour to:

Embark without delay the following regiments and batteries of your command, upon transports that the chief quartermaster has been directed to furnish you, viz: Colonel Barton's brigade comprising the Seventh Connecticut and Seventh New Hampshire Regiments Volunteer Infantry, and (temporarily) the Eighth Regiment U. S. Colored Troops; Montgomery's brigade, comprising Second South Carolina Volunteers (colored), Third U. S. Volunteers (colored), Fifty-fourth Massachusetts (colored) Volunteers; Henry's mounted brigade, comprising Fortieth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry and the Independent Battalion Massachusetts Cavalry; Langdon's light battery (four pieces), Elder's horse battery (four pieces), one section of James' Rhode Island Battery (two pieces).¹

The men were to carry six days rations, knapsacks, haversacks, and blankets and not less than sixty rounds of ammunition.² The orders to embark specifically limited the number of wagons per unit, ordered camp equipage left under security, and stated that only a small quantity of medical supplies need be taken. The medical director had been ordered to supply ambulances, and informed that the "hospital steamer Cosmopolitan, with a full supply of medical stores, will, it is expected, follow the command in a few hours".³ The orders suggested a short duration, rapidly moving expedition, with a minimum expectation of casualties. The units were reviewed by General Gillmore, and on February 5,

they went aboard ship.⁴ General Gillmore issued orders the same day to General Seymour to "start your command so as, if possible, to get the bulk of it to sea before daybreak."⁵ The task force was to rendezvous at the mouth of the St. Johns River by daybreak on the February 7. General Gillmore went on to inform General Seymour that Seymour was expected to:

pass the bar on Sunday morning's high tide, ascend the river to Jacksonville, effect a landing with your command, and push forward a mounted force as far as Baldwin, at the junction of the two railroads.⁶

General Gillmore further advised General Seymour that he had ordered Colonel Henry R. Guss, commander of the 97th Pennsylvania at Fernandina, to support the operation by tearing up the tracks on both railroads beyond Baldwin after the train came in to Jacksonville on February 8th. The object of the rapid advance inland after the landing was to attempt to get possession of a train.⁷

General Beauregard, commanding the Department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, reported to General Samuel Cooper as early as January 14, 1864, that he had anticipated a movement by the Federals when the officer responsible for keeping watch on the Union fleet in the waters of Port Royal and Broad River reported some thirty-five vessels had gone to sea in a fog on the afternoon of the fourteenth.⁸ This movement had been accompanied by a reduction of activity on the part of the Union forces on the adjacent islands. General Beauregard notified General J. F. Gilmer at Savannah

immediately of a possible Union move and alerted the proper staff officers to hold rail transportation ready on the Charleston and Savannah Railroad.⁹ Beauregard moved to Savannah on January 16, anticipating a Union attempt on that city, and stayed there until February 3.¹⁰ He then returned to Charleston as, up to that point, there had been no indication of a Union movement in the direction of Savannah. He left orders with General J. F. Gilmer, however, to hold the 64th Georgia Volunteers, the 1st Florida Battalion, and a light battery in readiness for a possible short notice move to Florida.¹¹

On the 6th of February, Major T. B. Brooks of General Gillmore's staff came in to Mayport, at the entrance to the St. Johns River, from Fernandina on board the steamer Island City. It was then, for the first time, that the blockading navy ships at the mouth of the river learned that there was to be a major expedition in that area the next day.¹² Major Brooks proposed pickets be placed so as to prevent advance warning of the landing, which was done. The major then hired four men, classified as "refugees," to go inland on Saturday night to cut the telegraph wire from the city and burn a railroad bridge. The gunboats Ottawa and Norwich furnished the arms, rations, and turpentine for the mission.¹³ A proposal to send the Norwich up the river immediately to trap the blockade runner Saint Mary's in McGirt's Creek was opposed by Major Brooks on the grounds it

might interfere with the operation. At 6:30 P.M., the Island City with the four "refugees" aboard proceeded up river to Trout Creek towing a canoe, dropped off the raiding force, and was back at Mayport 3 hours later.¹⁴ There is no record of whether their efforts were successful.

On the morning of February 6, the Federal expedition on board twenty steamers and eight schooners left Hilton Head. At daylight the next day, two vessels were sighted off the St. Johns' bar, and between 7:30 A.M. and 8 A.M. three transports came in and anchored. Because of the ebb-tide, only thirteen of the vesels were able to cross the bar that morning.¹⁵ The Maple Leaf, with General Seymour aboard, came in at 8:50 A.M. and plans were made a short while later aboard the gunboat Ottawa for the approach to Jacksonville. The gunboat Norwich was to proceed the transports at a distance upriver, stopping at a Mr. Palmer's place to learn what force, if any, was in Jacksonville.¹⁶ The Norwich got underway at 10:10 A.M., with the transports some six miles behind her. Palmer's was reached at 2.05 P.M. where it was learned that only about twenty men were in town and the expedition was not expected. The Norwich arrived off Jacksonville at 3:20 P.M. with the transport Maple Leaf at that time off Commodore's Point. The Norwich steamed in close past the wharves to the upper end of town and then came back, at which time the Maple Leaf was made fast to a dock and the troops aboard her started off-loading at 3:40 P.M. As the

troops debarked, the steamer General Hunter was fired on by the enemy's pickets. George Bowerem of The New York Tribune who accompanied the expedition wrote that all was quiet until the first ships were tying up to the piers at Jacksonville and then some shots were fired from a squad of rebel infantry from the woods on the outskirts of the town wounding the Second Mate of the General Hunter.¹⁷ The first troops to land, black soldiers from the 54th Massachusetts, took off on the double after the rebel snipers; they were soon joined by Company C. of the 1st Massachusetts Independent Cavalry. After a pursuit of some two miles by the black infantry troops, the cavalry took over and continued for another three miles. Eleven prisoners were taken to include two signal officers and their equipment and a number of horses and mules.¹⁸

George Bowerem went on to report that the troops were all landed and preparations made to push on to Baldwin in the morning. He went on to describe Jacksonville as being, "in a ruinous condition. Many of the houses are burned, others have been demolished."¹⁹ Some twenty-five families remained in the town, mostly women and children. The operation had come as a complete surprise with the first indication being the arrival of the Ottawa, followed in quick succession by the transports. Perhaps discretion was the better part of valor, because, the correspondent noted, "As we neared the pier, a few handkerchiefs were waved at us from some of the

buildings near the water. Every person in the place claims to be Union."²⁰ The expedition had just missed a train which had come in and departed on the 7th, but it was believed that the rebels were going to tear up the rails the following week for shipment to another part of the Confederacy. Whatever the truth of this was, the correspondent believed that the expedition was going to push forward rapidly to prevent any further damage to the railroad.²¹ He closed his account with the statement, "Every thing thus far has gone on in the most prosperous manner. The State abounds in cattle, and provisions are not scarce."²²

General Finegan telegraphed General Beauregard on the 7th (received on the 8th) that five Federal gunboats and two transports had made their appearance in the St. Johns; the following day General Finegan sent word that eighteen vessels (gunboats and transports) had arrived at Jacksonville and troops were landing.²³ General Beauregard found himself with a problem of trying to meet the threat to the Confederacy's source of subsistence supplies in Florida without handicapping the defenses of Charleston and Savannah at the same time that he was experiencing severe manpower shortages and was being asked to send men to reinforce General Bragg's Army in Tennessee. General Beauregard immediately notified General Samuel Cooper of the situation:

Enemy's demonstartion at Jacksonville, Fla., indicates intention to cut off our supplies from that quarter. Five thousand State troops in South Carolina and Georgia have just been discharged. Cannot their

place be supplied from another source to enable me to send sufficient force to Florida without endangering Charleston and Savannah?²⁴

General Gilmer, at Savannah, was at once ordered to send the troops he was holding in an alert status to Florida to report to General Finegan, and informed that Colonel A. H. Colquitt's brigade was being sent to him "for exigencies."²⁵ General W. M. Gardner, the commander of middle Florida, was ordered to send General Finegan, the commander of east Florida, every soldier he could spare.²⁶ General Finegan was notified by a February 8 message that reinforcements were being sent to him from middle Florida and from Savannah and that he was to "Do what you can to hold enemy at bay and prevent capture of slaves."²⁷

General Beauregard apparently had little confidence in the ability of the Confederate leadership in Florida to handle the problem. At 8:30 A.M. on February 9, General Beauregard requested that General Cooper send a "competent officer of sufficient rank" such as Lieutenant-General D. H. Hill to command in South Carolina as "I may be required in Georgia or Florida at any moment."²⁸ He also suggested that Major General Cobb be ordered to the department; Cooper's endorsement suggested, "Major-General Gilmer is the next ranking officer and should succeed to the command."²⁹ At 3:15 on the 9th, General Beauregard again wired General Cooper telling him that if there was an objection to sending D. H. Hill, "Major General McLaws would be equally

acceptable."³⁰ General Beauregard then wired General Hill telling him that he had requested his services and asked "Can you aid in the matter?"³¹ This was followed by a message to Major General Howell Cobb addressed to "Atlanta, Ga., or wherever he may be" informing him that Beauregard had applied for him to command two districts in Florida, and also asking, "Can you aid in the matter?"³² In between his attempts to get a senior officer to his department to free himself to go to Florida, General Beauregard informed General Cooper at 11:16 A.M. on the 9th:

Have already sent General Finegan from Savannah, two regiments infantry and one light battery, all I can spare. Am sending Colquitt's brigade from here to Savannah to replace them, and supply place of Georgia State troops lately discharged. Can't a brigade be sent to Florida temporarily from some other Department? Our supplies in that State becoming indispensable. I suppose enemy's movement is a feint to draw troops from South Carolina and Georgia.³³

On the day of the landing of the Federal forces at Jacksonville, the Confederate commander of the district of east Florida, General Finegan, was headquartered at Lake City. He had available to him two battalions and three independent companies of infantry, seven companies of cavalry, and two batteries of artillery, comprising (using strength figures reported at the end of January, 1864) some eighty-nine officers, and 1,178 men.³⁴ This force was spread from Fernandina and Mosquito Inlet on the Atlantic coast to Tampa on the Gulf and the Suwannee River in order to meet the occasional Federal raids such as the ones at Cedar Key,

Mosquito Inlet, and on the St. Johns and St. Marys rivers that had been taking place. General Finegan immediately started concentrating the Confederate forces presently in east Florida. Captain A. A. Ochus, commanding Bay Port, was ordered to march to Gainesville and from there to go by rail to Baldwin; Captain J. Q. Stewart was ordered to move his company by forced march to Otter Creek on the Florida Railroad, and from there by rail to Baldwin; Captain S. W. Mays, commanding No. 4, was to leave ten men there and move to Baldwin; Captain McNeill was to send half of his company to No. 4 relieving the ten men who would then rejoin Captain Mays; and Captain M. J. Clarke would move his company at Crystal River by forced marches to Baldwin.³⁵

On February 8, Union Brigadier General A. Schimmelfenning, with parts of the 1st and 2nd Brigades and Foster's brigade of General Vogdes's Division along with six pieces of artillery, crossed to Kiawah and Seabrook Islands on the South Carolina coast to make a demonstration aimed at distracting the enemy's attention from the Florida expedition. The next day, the Union forces continued their advance, crossing the Haulover Cut to John's Island at daylight, driving in the Confederate pickets with some loss and taking prisoners. Although suspecting that it was a diversionary move, General Beauregard was forced to take it seriously. He held the three and one half regiments of Colonel Alfred Holt Colquitt's brigade ready to reinforce

General H. A. Wise, who appeared to be facing some 4,500 Federal troops, and brought in other Confederate troops from Sullivan's and James's Islands on the South Carolina coast in the event the Union incursion was not just a demonstration.³⁶

In General Gillmore's February 9 report of the landing to General Halleck he stated that, "Upon our approach the enemy abandoned and sunk [sic] the steamer Saint Mary's and burned 270 bales of cotton a few miles above Jacksonville."³⁷ Apparently General Gillmore laid claim to the Saint Mary's in a letter (not found) to Admiral Dahlgren because the admiral replied rather heatedly to it in his own letter on February 12. The admiral took issue with General Gillmore's claim that the army's rapid move into the interior had caused the rebels to destroy the vessel and that the prize rightfully belonged to the army.³⁸ What was at issue was the practice of awarding blockade-runners as prizes which could bring the captor(s) financial gain. The admiral enclosed with his letter, one written by Acting Master Frank B. Meriam of the steamer Norwich, which stated the facts as the navy saw it. After determining that General Gillmore did not plan to move his troops inland on the night of the February 7, Meriam had anchored the Norwich as close as he could get off of McGirt's Creek at 6:30 P.M. and then stationed a picket-boat at the mouth of the creek. Meriam saw General Gillmore the next day (8th) and asked when the troops intended on moving forward. Gillmore's reply was, "This afternoon if the horses come

up."³⁹ Meriam, again that night, put a picket-boat in the mouth of McGirt's Creek. At 3:30 A.M., the 9th, the picket-boat sounded an alarm but was not located because of the heavy fog which had settled in. When the pickett-boat finally returned to the mother ship at 6:15 that morning, the officer in charge of it reported that he had fired at a boat which he had heard but could not see in the fog. Meriam found that the Saint Mary's had been boarded during the night, the cotton burned, and the ship sunk. Meriam arrived at the sunken vessel at 1 P.M. but found no trace that anyone had been there between the time it sank and his arrival. Later a small rifled gun was found on shore and some of the ship's boats were found in a creek. Meriam was convinced that if his picket-boat had not been in the creek, the Saint Mary's would have escaped up the river.⁴⁰ There is no record of how the problem was resolved but the incident is indicative of the financial gain that expeditions of this type made possible for Union leaders.

The rapid thrust inland by the Union forces did not start at daybreak on February 8, as planned, but at 3 P.M. The intention of the Union forces, at that time, seems to have been of conducting a rapid raid into the interior to disrupt Confederate internal communications, seizing or destroying whatever was of value to the enemy, and reconnoitering the local situation. The extent of penetration

was to be to the south prong of the Saint Marys River, some thirty to thirty-five miles from Jacksonville.

The Union forces departing Jacksonville were divided into three columns, each taking a different route. Colonel W. B. Barton's brigade was on the Lake City and Jacksonville road, Colonel Guy V. Henry's on a parallel road to the left, and Colonel J. R. Hawley's on a road to the right. These roads came together at a junction three miles above Jacksonville. It had originally been planned to march the infantry another three miles past that road junction, bivouac for the night, and then move on in the morning to attack Camp Finegan.⁴¹ The infantry reached the junction after dark, where it was thought advisable to stop, but Colonel Henry with the cavalry and artillery continued to move inland. Although it was anticipated that contact with the rebels would be made at a small creek two miles from Jacksonville, Henry's column traveled some five miles before meeting anything. A correspondent from the New York Tribune left this description of the ride:

A night's ride, with the darkness so dense we could not see our horse's heads, through a hostile country which affords advantages for guerillas, over a road the bridges of which the enemy had destroyed, and so forced our troops to ford the streams, would not be esteemed a pleasant adventure by our timid friends at the North. Every one, however, was in good spirits, and did not care how rapidly he rode, provided he could soon come up with the enemy.⁴²

The raiding force came upon an abandoned four man picket post and continued on for another half mile where they

came in sight of the Confederate camp-fires at a reserve picket post. A charge by the advance guard of the Union raiding force captured five pickets at the post and a sixth later who was wounded and was captured after running into the woods.⁴³ After picking up the enemy's horses, the column continued on another ten minutes until it came in sight of Camp Finegan. Scouts had reported that there were some 200 cavalry men formed up in line of battle awaiting the Union advance. Colonel Henry elected to bypass the camp with his force and hit instead an artillery camp some two miles further on. This was done without the artillery men being aware of their approach. After the advance guard reported the location of the camp, Colonel Henry and Major Atherton Stevens went forward to observe it. They saw about 150 men sitting around the fires in the act of preparing food to eat. The horses and mules were still harnessed and the wagons were partially loaded with the officers' baggage. Obviously the artillerymen had not been warned.

Colonel Henry returned to his command and advanced the Independent Battalion to within twenty yards of the camp. The 40th Massachusetts mounted infantry were formed in line of battle directly in front of Captain Elder's horse artillery and, with Colonel Henry and Major Stevens in front, the buglers blew a loud blast and the Union forces charged. Although it was reported that the cavalry dashed into the

middle of the camp and surrounded it on all sides, most of the rebel troops managed to escape into the woods at the first sound of the bugles and under cover of darkness.⁴⁴ Sergeant A. J. Clement of Company M, the Independent Battalion, Massachusetts Cavalry, participated in the charge and he recalled that about midnight the Independent Battalion arrived on a little rise overlooking the artillery camp. When the charge was about to take place, he recalled, Colonel Henry:

ordered the bugler to sound the charge twice, and shouted to the men these words, "If ever you yell in your lives, boys, yell now!" And in the language of the official report of the that event, "They charged with a yell that still lingers in the ears of those who heard it."⁴⁵

The spoils of victory included two three-inch rifled guns belonging to Captain H. F. Abell's Company B, Milton Light Artillery and two six-pounder brass smooth-bore guns belonging to Captain J. L. Dunham's Company A, Milton Light Artillery. Everything else captured belonged to one or the other of the batteries; a train that was expected, however, was warned off by a telegraph operator. It was the last message the operator was able to get off for, "Major Stevens walked into the room and seized the fellow by the throat as he was on the point of sending another message. In a few minutes his instrument was knocked to pieces and the wire cut."⁴⁶

In Captain Abell's report on the loss of the two three-inch rifled guns at Twelve-Mile Station, four miles above

Camp Finegan, the captain placed the blame on the poor condition of his horses which had also caused him to leave one of his caissons, forge, and battery wagon. General Finegan's endorsement to this report confirms at length the existing problem of disease among the Confederate artillery horses and the fact that Abell's horses had been scheduled for removal to Lake City for treatment when the Federal expedition intervened.⁴⁷ Captain Abell's report also included notification of an additional three-inch gun his unit lost the following day at Baldwin when it was captured by the advancing Federal cavalry.

Captain Dunham placed the blame for the loss of his two six-pounders on the railroad. When word was received of the Federal landing, the unit's baggage and property had been moved to the railroad depot at Pickett's (Ten-Mile Station). On the evening of February 8, Lieutenant Colonel A. H. McCormick, 2nd Florida Cavalry, sent back word to the battery to move a section of guns up immediately to the rear of a battle line he was establishing on the west side of the drill field at Camp Finegan. Captain Dunham was not in command of the unit at the time, having been on sick leave for over a month, but passed the order on to Lieutenant Bates, then commanding, who moved the guns forward. Captain Dunham moved up to Camp Finegan where he was told to halt the artillery and form on the left of the line. However, three of the guns being brought up had already passed the proposed line of

battle. When they were finally halted and returned, Lieutenant Colonel McCormick told Lieutenant Bates to move on towards Baldwin. As the baggage and company property was at Pickett's, the battery returned there awaiting the cars that were supposed to pick up the unit's property before moving on to Baldwin. After waiting a while, the men, except for the guard, were allowed to sleep. The horses were unhitched, awaiting the arrival of the cavalry and the infantry. At about 11 or 11:30 that night, they were aroused by a sergeant from Company B, Milton Light Artillery, riding through the camp shouting, "Save yourselves if you can; the enemy is right upon you!"⁴⁸ The loss to the Milton Light Artillery, besides the guns, was given as eighteen men, twenty-three horses, twenty-two mules, one battery wagon, five other wagons, and a forge.⁴⁹ General Finegan's endorsement to Dunham's report states that it appeared that Lieutenant Colonel McCormick did not send back any information of the advance of the enemy to the artillery company.⁵⁰ The lost five pieces of artillery were a severe loss because such weapons were in short supply in Florida.

Meanwhile the Federal infantry, after a short stop, changed their original plans calling for an overnight stay at the road junction, and instead continued on to Camp Finegan. James H. Clark, with the 115th New York, recorded his impressions of the move:

We made a hard march--mostly on a double-quick--through swamps and woods, fording creeks and scaling

piles of logs and brush, until the point of attack was just ahead.⁵¹

The Federal troops managed to surprise and capture the pickets protecting the camp before they could give warning. However, after almost surrounding the camp, something alerted the Confederate soldiers and a great number were able to escape into the swamps. The Union troops took possession of the camp and Confederate equipment that was left there. Among the "fruits of victory" were some food supplies. Clark described what happened next:

The rebel camp was filled with fat turkeys, chickens, ducks, and geese; and as soon as arms were stacked the order charge hen-coops was given, and the soldiers soon swept away all poultry from before them until the feathers flew in all directions. Such a cackling and gobbling was never heard in eastern Florida, and the rebels secreted in neighboring swamps must have enjoyed the midnight serenade, to say the least. The camp was abandoned in great haste.

We found hogs hanging up just dressed; kettles of beef steaming over the fire; plates of warm hominy and liver on the table; and papers and books strewn in every direction. Rebel officers hardly stopped to dress, and left coats and swords behind for the dreaded Yankees.⁵²

It is obvious from Clark's description that the Confederates were not expecting the Union advance and had not set out adequate security. The 115th New York spent part of the next morning scouring the swamps and woods for rebels who "appeared to be perfectly panic-stricken, and large numbers of them surrendered without firing a gun or making the least resistance."⁵³ After finishing their search, the infantry moved toward Baldwin, some fifteen hard road miles away.

Colonel Henry's mounted force left the artillery camp at Ten-Mile Station at 4 A.M. on February 9, leaving one company to guard the property. At the various places where the road crossed the railroad, tracks were taken up either to prevent the rebels from getting supplies or being able to send troops to Henry's rear.⁵⁴ Colonel Henry met no resistance for ten miles and entered Baldwin at 7 A.M. George Bowerem described Baldwin as:

A place of fifteen buildings, the largest of which is the railroad station. None of the enemy were seen. The place boasts one hotel. When we entered the town, the proprietor was asleep, and shortly after came downstairs, only half dressed to find out what was going on.⁵⁵

Another telegraph operator and three instruments were captured here. Additionally, the Union forces captured three railroad cars, one containing Captain Abell's three-inch gun and a caisson, and the other two full of corn. In the railroad depot was found a large quantity of supplies and "cotton, rice, tobacco, pistols, and other property valued at a half million dollars."⁵⁶ Breakfast at the hotel was paid for with Confederate money that was found in the trash in the depot.⁵⁷ The correspondent was perceptive when he wrote, "At Baldwin, the railroad from Fernandina to Cedar Keys crosses the Florida Central. It will be seen at a glance that it is an important place to hold."⁵⁸ Baldwin would later figure prominently in the plans of both northern and southern commanders.

From "Finegan's Camp" General Seymour had reported to General Gillmore on February 9 that he had arrived at that location the day before and had with him the 47th, 48th, and 115th New York regiments. He had sent Colonel Henry with the 7th Connecticut, 3rd U. S. Colored Troops, and 8th U. S. Colored Troops on to Baldwin. In his assessment of the situation he said, "The subject of provisions will be one of great difficulty. Unless a train is put on the road you cannot subsist any force beyond Baldwin with wagons. I hope, therefore, that all haste will be made to get up the Fernandina train; we are not likely to take any other."⁵⁹ He closed with the remark, "If you want to see what Florida is good for come out to Baldwin."⁶⁰ Seymour had arrived at Baldwin the afternoon of the 9th and later in the day, General Gillmore and part of his staff joined him.

Meanwhile, General Alexander Schimmelfennig, conducting the Union's diversionary attack, had remained on John's Island on February 10; the next day he pushed forward some three miles, meeting the enemy's pickets, and firing with artillery.⁶¹ He still occupied part of General Beauregard's attention who continued to hold Colonel Colquitt's brigade in the Savannah area.

On the morning of February 9, General Gillmore had been at Fernandina and made a tour of the area with Colonel Henry R. Guss, the commander of the 97th Pennsylvania Volunteers who were garrisoning the town. Earlier that same morning,

Major Galusha Pennypacker with 290 men of the 97th Pennsylvania had left Fernandina and crossed to the mainland over the railroad bridge for a raid on Camp Cooper. While the main body started inland at 8:30 A.M., Captain DeWitt C. Lewis with twenty-five men of the 97th left at 9:00 A.M. with a detachment of sailors and two howitzers aboard the United States brig Perry. The plan was to have the Perry, along with the steamer Island City, move to the mouth of the Nassau River, and then up that river for about fifty miles until opposite Camp Cooper, to cooperate in the raid with Major Pennypacker's land forces.

Major Pennypacker, with help from a Mr. Grisham and two colored guides, moved overland to Lofton Creek, approaching Camp Cooper in the early morning hours of the 10th. Shortly after 3:00 A.M., the scouts reported the camp a mile ahead. Pennypacker deployed the men of the 97th so as to hit the camp from three sides. The attack took place at dawn and, except for a few security guards, the Union forces found the camp empty. It had been occupied by Major George P. Harrison and three companies of the 2nd Florida Cavalry who had left Camp Cooper on the 8th for Camp Finegan.

Two of the 97th Pennsylvania's companies were sent to make contact with Captain Lewis aboard the steamer but this almost turned into a tragedy. The troops were wearing captured Confederate gray as a lark, and the spotters aboard the Federal vessels thought at first they were about to be

attacked. The truth was discovered in time to prevent anyone getting hurt. The two companies were embarked aboard the steamer for the trip back to Fernandina; Major Pennypacker had, meanwhile, already left with the remainder of the force to return home. Pennypacker's raiders had travelled a circuit of some fifty miles in twenty-four hours in a well planned and executed, coordinated attack and came up almost empty.⁶² Had the raid been conducted two days earlier, it might have been more than worth the effort in view of events yet to come.

On February 8, 1864, Company C (Beauregard Volunteers) 6th Georgia Regiment, left Charleston, South Carolina for Lake City, Florida. Partly because of a gap of twenty-six miles between the Georgia and Florida railroad lines, they would not arrive at Lake City until February 15. General Beauregard had long been concerned about this gap between the railroads in the two states within his Department. As early as 1862, in a letter written to Judge Thomas Baltzell in Charleston, South Carolina, he had called attention to this gap as a handicap to rapidly concentrating troops from Savannah or the interior of Georgia for the defense of middle Florida.⁶³ Passing through Madison, a member of the 6th Georgia, described a dinner prepared for his unit by the ladies of Madison, Florida:

Learning that we were en route for the defence of the "Land of Flowers", and parry the threatened blow now aimed at their homes, and that we would pass through their town, they had prepared for us a

sumptuous dinner of such viands as they knew would be heartily relished by hungry soldiers. After dinner, in behalf of our command, the accomplished Bennett Stewart, of Company 'G' of our Regiment, tendered the thanks of the command to the ladies for this manifestation of their appreciation of our services in their behalf. He assured them that their homes should be protected at all hazards, and the enemy driven from their State.⁶⁴

On February 9, General Gillmore ordered Colonel Joseph C. Abbott of the 7th New Hampshire to proceed with his regiment from Jacksonville and report to General Seymour's advance force.⁶⁵ The following morning, Colonel Henry's mounted brigade left Baldwin at 9 o'clock heading westward. The column moved cautiously, being wary of bushwackers, but met no opposition. Four miles out of Baldwin, at a point along the railroad, they found thirteen bales of cotton; further on, approaching Barber's Station, they entered a building next to the railroad and found 1,000 barrels of turpentine and 500 pounds of bacon.⁶⁶ By eleven that morning, Colonel Henry's troops entered Barber's where the main body halted and formed a defensive hollow square.⁶⁷ An advance guard moved forward to see if the enemy had set up a defensive position at the south fork of the St. Marys River, which lay some three-quarters of a mile ahead. The advance guard of four ran into an ambush the Confederates had set up and one man was killed and two wounded.⁶⁸

Colonel Henry dismounted one company of the 40th Massachusetts as skirmishers with instructions to pay particular attention to the right of the road where the

conformation of the river exposed the right of the Confederate line to the Union fire. The Independent Battalion was then sent charging down the road to the bridge which was discovered to have been destroyed. The men continued on, fording the river at that point. When most of the Independent Battalion had forded the river, the Confederates withdrew.⁶⁹ Sergeant Clement of the Independent Battalion was part of the force that forded the river and he reported that the enemy fled when the Union troops crossed, leaving a large number of horses behind. He was unable to say how many horses as his unit moved on immediately.⁷⁰ Clark of the 115th New York claimed that at least one of the Union dead had been murdered. The man was a sergeant, one of the Union wounded who was lying down unable to help himself. Clark claims the Confederates came back and put six more bullets into his body.⁷¹

The Tribune correspondent reported that the Confederate troops had been told that the Union force did not number more than 300 and that it could be easily prevented from fording the river.⁷² Some fifty horses were captured along with a number of sabres, carbines, and pistols. Bowerem was not impressed with Barber's:

I learn this place is called Barber's from the fact that a man named Barber formerly kept here a sort of hotel. His own house, with five or six out-houses are the only buildings in the vicinity. Barber left the premises on the morning of our advance. He owns twenty-thousand head of cattle and is reputed to be the wealthiest man in the state. No one, however, would judge him to be a man of wealth after seeing the

miserable hovel⁷³ in which he dwelt. He is a rebel of the worst sort.

Bowerem's information must have been rumor as there is no confirmation of Barber's status as the "wealthiest man in the state" or the owner of 20,000 cattle.

The Confederate force opposing the Union advance was the 2nd Florida Cavalry. Captain Winston Stephens, who commanded Company B, wrote these words to his wife on the day after the skirmish:

I write you these few lines to allay the anxiety you may feel on my account. We have so far been able to elude the enemy, though we have at times been surrounded and from appearances we thought our prospect was fair for a Northern prison. Our command consists of 256 infantry and 56 men in the cavalryI don't know if we will be able to get out of it without being captured We are having hard times and plenty of it. I think the enemy are some ten thousand or more.⁷⁴

General Finegan, in his report of the engagement, reported that the Union force was met at the "Little Saint Mary's" by Major G. P. Harrison and two companies of cavalry who were marching from Camp Cooper to Lake City and "being unaware of the force of the enemy, gave them battle at a strong point."⁷⁵ General Finegan reported Confederate losses at two killed and two wounded.⁷⁶ Major Harrison's troops were the ones who had been at Camp Cooper that might have been captured in the raid conducted by Major Pennypacker and the 97th Pennsylvania Volunteers had the raid been a day or two earlier.

On February 10, the day of the skirmish at Barber's Ford, General Finegan continued the concentration of his troops in Florida. From Lake City he ordered the following:

1. Lieutenant Drury Rambo, at Wellborn, was to leave 20 men with the horses at that location and report with the balance of his men to Captain Dunham at Lake City.
2. Captain Dunham was directed to prepare his two howitzers for immediate duty and, taking what men he needed from his own and Captain Abell's companies, report to Major A. Bonaud.
3. Major Bonaud was to move his battalion along with a section of Captain Dunham's artillery, Captain Crawford's infantry company, and all the cavalry present in Lake City to the west side of the St. Marys River to a location between where it was crossed by the railroad and Barber's bridge. His orders were to prevent any further advance of the enemy and report anything of consequence. He was to keep his men in camp and be ready to form line of battle "at any moment."⁷⁷

Major G. W. Scott and his cavalry, along with Captain Crawford's Independent Infantry Company, were to report to Major Bonaud. Major P. B. Bird, 6th Battalion Florida Volunteers, was to move at once to Waldo, gather his men and supplies, and then move to Sanderson to await orders.

Captain Charles Cone, Cone's Independent Cavalry, was to report to Major Scott. Scott was to move to Sanderson and there join Major Harrison's cavalry companies.⁷⁸

General Gillmore informed General Seymour on the 10th that it was expected that a working locomotive would be available within a few days and that he need not worry about being supplied. Further, General Gillmore was going to send several companies from Colonel Montgomery's 2nd South Carolina as scouts up the river for a few days, and had ordered three companies of engineers to Baldwin where, under Lieutenant Michie, work would commence on a defensive position. The message contained this order, "You will push forward as far as you can toward the Suwannee River."⁷⁹

In another message that same day, General Gillmore acknowledged Admiral Dahlgren's message which notified him of the admiral's planned departure. General Gillmore expressed the idea that the three gunboats that would remain in the St. Johns were ample as, "The enemy will not make any resistance in East Florida for the present. They are panic stricken."⁸⁰ Gillmore included the statement that he planned to be fifty miles from Jacksonville that night.⁸¹ General Seymour was informed that, as previously agreed, four companies had been ordered to Camp Finegan and the 54th Massachusetts ordered to Ten-Mile Station.⁸²

Colonel Henry's Union raiding force left Barber's at one in the afternoon and arrived at Sanderson about six P.M.

George Bowerem reported on the Confederate stores captured and destroyed:

Sanderson is a village a little larger than Baldwin, a railroad station, and distant from Jacksonville forty miles. The rebels had left the place fifteen minutes before we arrived. In the afternoon, the cars had been there from Lake City and taken away some government stores. Three large buildings near the depot were in flames when we arrived. One of the buildings had in it three thousand bushels of corn, and another two thousand barrels of turpentine and resin. The remaining building contained commissary stores. The conflagration continued all that night and during the following day. In the depot we found two hundred bags of salt and fifty bushels of oats. Our horses did not suffer for forage, and as for light to enable us to look about the town, the burning buildings afforded sufficient. Sanderson was the centre to which all the forage and provisions for the State were forwarded.⁸³

The writer was wrong about Sanderson being the state's center for collection of forage and provisions, but the amount that was captured or burned showed it to be one of the more important collection points. At this point, the raiding force was achieving great success in their mission of cutting off Confederate commissary supplies from Florida by seizing the various collection points along the railroad right-of-way.

Colonel Henry's mounted brigade stayed at Sanderson until two A.M. on the 11th and then headed westward again towards Lake City. By eleven A.M., the Union force was within two miles of Lake City without having met any southern resistance. However, when the Union mounted force were within a mile and one half of Lake City, they ran into a Confederate force in a belt of woods. Captain Elder's horse

artillery went into battery and the 40th Massachusetts and the Independent Battalion were sent forward as skirmishers to feel out the enemy position. An accompanying correspondent described the contact:

The enemy had a heavy line of skirmishers one mile in length, and although one company of the Fortieth broke the left of the enemy's line, it was impossible, in consequence of the paucity of our numbers, to prevent him from throwing forward his right, so as to get on our left and rear. Under the circumstances, Colonel Henry wisely decided to await the arrival of infantry to aid him.⁸⁴

The Union troops retreated slowly at a walk covered by the Independent Battalion. Sergeant Clement of the Independent Battalion recorded that darkness was rapidly falling and the horses jaded and food short for both men and mounts. The raiding force had gone far beyond their original destination of Baldwin and, in view of an impending rain storm, Colonel Henry decided to fall back a few miles for the night.⁸⁵ The night was spent in a torrent of rain. Bowerem confirms the spent and hungry condition of the men and horses. He also reported that Henry sent a message to Seymour that night asking for further orders and stating his opinion that he could get to Lake City if one more infantry regiment was added to his advance force.⁸⁶ The problem was that the infantry was some thirty-four miles away and it was difficult to get them up to Henry in time. Additionally, there was a problem of resupply, as Henry was finding out. Without a working locomotive, all supplies were being brought up to Sanderson by wagon, a slow and tedious accomplishment.

It was finally decided that Henry's advance force would fall back to Sanderson to which point several infantry regiments had been advanced.⁸⁷

James H. Clark of the 115th New York remembered that cold, rainy, miserable night but he recalled that it wasn't only the Union forces who were suffering:

Three of the "Johnnies" being rather "hard up" for grub, and not very bitter advocates of treason, came to the edge of a piece of woods and waved a couple of white rags as tokens of peace. Some of the boys went up to them, took away their guns, and escorted them to camp, where they took the oath of allegiance.⁸⁸

Confederate General Finegan reported the engagement to General Beauregard in a message dated February 13th, 1864 claiming that he had removed from Sanderson the large amount of commissary and quartermaster supplies that had been there before the Union troops arrived with exception of some 1,500 bushels of corn which the Confederates had burned.⁸⁹ He went on to say:

This expedition is really formidable, and organized as it is with so large a force of cavalry or mounted infantry, threatens disastrous results, unless checked at once by a sufficient force. The enemy is fortifying Baldwin, and also I understand, a position on the Little Saint Mary's. I should have more cavalry to prevent their superior mounted force from making raids into the rich counties of Alachua and Marion, and not only running off the negroes by the Saint John's River, but destroying the large amounts of sugar and sirup [sic] which have not yet been sent to market. The supply of beef from the peninsula will of course be suspended until the enemy is driven off.⁹⁰

On February 11th, General Beauregard sent General Finegan the following instructions:

Do not fight when expecting re-enforcements unless compelled or certain of success. In such case maneuver to delay enemy. You can expect no more re-enforcements at present from Georgia than those already announced to you.⁹¹

At the point where Colonel Henry's mounted troops faced General Finegan's Confederate troops before Lake City, the Union forces had a better than two to one advantage in manpower and artillery, and a significantly greater advantage in mobility. The southern forces could have easily been bypassed and Henry could have continued on with little or no opposition to destroy the railroad bridge over the Suwannee. The possibility also existed of even raiding Lake City and capturing or destroying the supplies accumulated there, perhaps even capturing the locomotive so desperately needed by the Federals.

General Seymour sent General Gillmore a letter from Baldwin dated 7 A.M. the 11th, in which he reported the results of Henry's skirmish at Barber's and that Henry had been at Sanderson the night before, and was "pushing on toward Lake City this morning as far as he can with safety."⁹² Seymour gave the current disposition of the rest of the Federal forces which were as follows; the 115th New York was at Barber's; the 47th New York, 48th New York, 7th New Hampshire, and two guns were en route from Baldwin to Barber's.⁹³ He then went on to say that that the proposed movement on Lake City was not possible because of transportation difficulties, and recommended the advance

force be withdrawn at once with only Jacksonville and Palatka to be held. General Seymour said he was convinced that Florida would not come back into the Union "until more important successes elsewhere are assured" and "the Union cause would have been far better benefitted by Jeff. Davis having removed this railroad to Virginia than by any trivial and non-strategic success you might meet."⁹⁴

Captain Gustavas Sullivan Dana, chief signal officer on Seymour's staff reported on an incident that had happened the night before Seymour's letter was written:

We reached Baldwin on the 10th and General Gillmore came out that night and talked all night with General Seymour keeping us poor staff officers who were trying to catch 40 winks on the floor with our saddles awake. I judge from what I heard that neither general had much faith in the success of the expedition and that it was purely a political move, intending to drive the rebels to the west side of the Suwannee River giving us the whole east part of the State which was to be protected by gun-boats patrolling the Suwannee and Saint Mary's Rivers, and thus enabling the larger part of the State to have a vote in the coming presidential election.⁹⁵

If Captain Dana's observations are true, both Generals Seymour and Gillmore were taking a very narrow view of the objectives of the expedition. Further, General Gillmore had not understood President Lincoln's and John Hay's instructions to the effect that restoration of the state was not to change the original objectives of the expedition.

General Gillmore was apprehensive about the advance of the Union forces past Sanderson. He sent one message to General Seymour on the 11th which informed Seymour that eight

companies of the 54th Massachusetts had been sent to Baldwin and advised Seymour, "Don't risk a repulse in advancing on Lake City, but hold Sanderson unless there are reasons for falling back which I don't know."⁹⁶ This was followed by a second message to Seymour by courier from Baldwin which contained the suggestion, "If your advance meets serious opposition concentrate at Sanderson and the South Fork of the Saint Mary's and, if necessary, bring Henry to the latter place."⁹⁷ General Seymour replied from Baldwin by telegraph (it had been installed that day between Baldwin and Jacksonville) that he had just received Gillmore's message and that Seymour's command had already left for Sanderson. It continued that there was no news from Henry, Colonel Benjamin C. Tilghman (3rd U. S. Colored Troops) was at Baldwin, Colonel Charles W. Fribbley (8th U. S. Colored Troops) was at Pickett's, no Negroes had come in, and that this (Baldwin) was the place to fortify.⁹⁸

In a concern for more security, General Gillmore ordered the 54th Massachusetts to Baldwin (less two companies which were to be used for security in Jacksonville) and directed Colonel Montgomery to send three companies of his 2nd South Carolina Regiment to either Doctor's Lake or Green Cove Springs, crossing places on the west bank of the St. John's River, to try to capture rebel pickets that might be stationed there.⁹⁹

General Beauregard saw something in the Federal expedition that, unfortunately for the Federals, the Union generals did not see for themselves. General Beauregard wired General Gilmer at Charleston at 12:30 P.M. on the 11th:

Enemy's present movements indicate efforts to concentrate from both sides of peninsula of Florida at Tallahassee; therefore, concentration of movement on our side from Trader's Hill. [see illustration Fig.4-4] I do not approve pressing to concentrate at point in rear of Finegan to prevent junction and maneuvers to strike blow on either fragment.¹⁰⁰

A half-hour later, General Beauregard sent the following message to Brigadier General Gardner, commanding middle Florida, at Quincy, Florida: "Important to know whether enemy made a landing in force about this time on Gulf Coast of Florida, Saint Mark's especially. Have measures taken to secure and forward earliest possible information soon as possible."¹⁰¹ Regrettably for the Union, Florida was split between the Department of the South (Gillmore's command) and the Department of the Gulf (in which Tallahassee and St. Marks fell). Later, Union General Asboth from the Department of the Gulf would suggest:

In my humble opinion, a combined movement toward Tallahassee from the Atlantic via Jacksonville and Lake City, and from the Gulf via Saint Mark's, would have proved more disastrous for the rebels, and I would most respectfully request to be enabled to establish a permanent post at Saint Mark's; it would afford another safe base of operations toward the interior of Florida, protected, as it is, by blockading vessels of Admiral Farragut, anchored near the light house, 7 miles seaward from Saint Mark's.¹⁰²

Another letter, from Union Brigadier General Woodbury, district of Key West and Tortugas, to his parent command, the

Department of the Gulf, dated March 8, 1864, contained information about the efforts of a Commander Harmorny who was attempting to organize a group of southern deserters to burn the railroad bridge over the Suwannee River on the Jacksonville and Tallahassee Railroad. This group had already mounted a forty-five mile raid on the "largest salt-works in the Confederacy--395 kettles and 52 boilers, having capacity to make about 1,600 bushels daily."¹⁰³ On April 4, 1864, General Asboth of the Department of the Gulf, in reporting that "since our reverse in East Florida the rebels have become more enterprising in their movements and more bitter in their persecutions of all who show sympathy for the Union" suggested:

To prevent the entire ruin of those unfortunate Union families and secure us the control over West Florida, it would be desirable that at the next advance of the Federal Forces in East Florida a combined movement be made also in West Florida, by adequate forces from Barrancas, Boggy Bayou, opposite East Pass, Washington Point, the head of the Choctawhatchee Bay, and Saint Mark's, the terminus of the Tallahassee Railroad.¹⁰⁴

These observations came too late to be of use. In view of the fact that immediately after the Federal landing on February 8, General Finegan had stripped middle and east Florida of all the troops available and concentrated them at Lake City, an expedition from the Gulf at that time would have had a high probability of success. It might also have broken up somewhat the concentration at Olustee that General Finegan did manage to put together by the 20th of February

had the timing of the raid been coordinated with the troop landing at Jacksonville. Whatever might have been, Beauregard saw the danger a two-pronged attack presented; the leaders of the Federal expedition did not.

Governor Milton wired Confederate Secretary of War Seddon on the 10th (received the 11th) the following:

The enemy hold Baldwin and Sanderson and the telegraphic operators and their instruments. Wanted re-enforcements both in East and West Florida. At least 5,000 additional troops are necessary to prevent the destruction of all public as well as private property, and to save Florida. Without prompt help all will be lost.¹⁰⁵

At 8:30 A.M., on the 11th, General Beauregard wired General Cooper at Richmond:

Governor Milton telegraphs following:

"Enemy's force at least 5,000 strong. Not force enough in State to prevent him passing through it." Col. J. F. McClellan, West Florida telegraphs for re-enforcements. Immense loss of subsistence for armies and of property seems inevitable. We need at least 5,000 troops.

Have sent Governor Milton all I can spare without risking loss of Charleston and Savannah. Cannot two brigades be ordered there from Northwest Georgia or North Carolina temporarily?¹⁰⁶

General Beauregard followed this message to General Cooper with another one at 2 P.M. that afternoon:

General Finegan reports enemy about to attack him near Lake City. Rapidity of movements indicate Tallahassee as the objective point, probably to form junction with forces from the Gulf. I have ordered two and a half additional regiments and one light battery to Florida, to prevent loss of that State; but have much weakened Savannah and railroad to that city. If one brigade could be sent here and another to Savannah, I would send immediately balance of Colquitt's troops to General Finegan. A prompt answer is desired, as well as for 2 general officers I applied for few days since.¹⁰⁷

The various Confederate leaders close to the scene of action, to include Governor Milt o and General Finegan, saw the threat as a very serious one to a major source of subsistence supplies to the Confederacy, to the stability of the slave population, and to the maintenance of Florida as a part of the Confederacy. To meet that threat, General Beauregard was forced to weaken his defenses around Savannah and request help from Richmond. No mention was made of any political implications regarding the 1864 Federal presidential election, a motive that many later writers would overrate in evaluating the expedition.

This was the critical point in the expedition that spelled its success or failure. Instead of exploiting the benefits gained by mobility and surprise and continuing the momentum they had achieved (key assets in the Clausewitzian concept of the conduct of warfare), the Federal leaders turned conservative. The full potential of the expedition was lost on the men who conceived and executed it because of their limited ability to realize the ramifications of total warfare. At a time when daring and innovation were called for, the Union commanders turned conservative and inflexible in their conduct of the expedition.

At 7 A.M. on the 12th, General Seymour sent a message from Sanderson to General Gillmore informing him that he had ordered Colonel Henry's advance force to fall back to Sanderson and suggested that Colonel Fribley's 8th U. S.

Colored Troops be sent permanently to garrison Palatka.¹⁰⁷ The same morning, General Gillmore ordered General Seymour to concentrate all of his forces at Baldwin "without delay " and alerted Seymour to a possible danger from a mounted force that was reported to be heading in the direction of Seymour's right flank on the Saint Marys River.¹⁰⁹ General Gillmore added the information that the locomotive had not yet arrived.¹¹⁰ General Gillmore then directed Colonel Tilghman with the 3rd U. S. Colored Troops at Baldwin to send scouts to the ford of the St. Marys River and informed Seymour of this action by a separate message.¹¹¹ At 1 P.M., Gillmore replied to Seymour's 7 A.M. message that he had just received:

As you have ordered Henry back to the South Fork of Saint Mary's, I presume you consider the enemy too strong in your front. Send me your latest reliable information of the enemy. I shall garrison Palatka with the Saint Augustine command under Colonel Osborn, Twenty-fourth Massachusetts. Keep a force well out towards Sanderson if practicable.¹¹²

At 2 P.M. on the 12th, Seymour informed Gillmore:

Colonel Henry has just arrived. Both Henry and Elder confirm my views as to holding only the South Fork of the Saint Mary's at present. I shall strengthen that point, also Callahan, and when forage and provisions are right another advance will secure your object with as much certainty as now. Henry will go to Gainesville to-night to catch the trains there. I shall stay here at Sanderson a little while. Probably Henry will go from Gainesville to Barber's or Baldwin. Will you send two or three companies of the Second South Carolina to Middleburg in order to occupy the bridge at that place? Now, if you choose, concentrate troops at Jacksonville or at any other point where they can be supplied, and as I want them to advance I will call them up to Barber's before going further on.¹¹³

In a post-script, Seymour asked Gillmore to have the naval force at Fernandina destroy all the ferry boats in the St. Marys as far up it as they could reach, and, in the event an advance by his forces was made, it was suggested that a demonstration be made against Savannah. Lastly, he stated that he expected Captain John Hamilton's Light Battery E, 3rd U. S. Artillery, and the regiments that were ordered to him to be sent up to Baldwin.¹¹⁴ Captain Hamilton's Battery had recently been ordered to Jacksonville to reinforce the expedition.¹¹⁵ Meanwhile, Colonel Francis Osborn at St. Augustine was ordered by General Gillmore on the 12th to move the 24th Massachusetts, less two companies and the veterans who were due to go North on leave, and proceed to Picolata on the St. Johns for temporary duty.¹¹⁶ Gillmore's plan to hold and fortify an area marked by a line from Fernandina to Baldwin to Palatka to Saint Augustine appeared to be taking shape.

General Beauregard, caught in a dilemma over the conflicting problems of the Florida expedition and the defenses of Savannah and Charleston, decided to call the Union bluff represented by Union General Schimmelfenning's forces and their demonstration on John's Island. On the night of the 11th, General Beauregard ordered a heavy fire of all of his batteries bearing on Morris Island as if to cover an assault.¹¹⁷ Whether this was effective or mere coincidence, the Union troops withdrew back to Kiaweh that

night in obedience to orders. While on John's Island, however, the Union forces discovered a book containing all the signals sent from Folly Island by the signal telegraph, correctly showing that the rebels had the key to the Union system of signals.¹¹⁸ The pullback of Federal forces at this time to their previous positions, allowed General Beauregard to release Colonel Colquitt's brigade with the Chatham Artillery attached to leave for Florida where they arrived in time to play a key part in the battle of Olustee. Had General Seymour not wasted a crucial week in senseless delay, the Federal demonstration would have been considered successful. As things turned out, it was too little and too late.

On February 13, Colonel Henry was ordered to take his command on a raid of Gainesville with the mission of capturing or disabling trains supposed to be at that location. He was expressly instructed that "all public property that cannot be removed will be destroyed, but private property will be scrupulously respected."¹¹⁹ This was in keeping with the political objective of seeking restoration under the 10 percent plan. On his return to Baldwin a small force was to be sent to Middleburg.¹²⁰ In order to increase the fire power of his mobile forces, the left wing of the 7th New Hampshire, a regiment which, like the 7th Connecticut, was armed with the seven-shot repeater Spencer rifles, was ordered to exchange their weapons with

the 40th Massachusetts who were serving as mounted infantry. Near the end of the war Colonel Joseph Abbott, commanding the 7th New Hampshire spoke of the matter in a letter to the adjutant-general of New Hampshire:

I protested, but in vain. It was to no purpose that I urged that more than three hundred of my men were recruits, that since their arrival at my camp there had been barely time to instruct them in the use of the carbine, and that they were not drilled at all in the use of the rifle. The order was issued, and the left wing of the regiment was deprived of its carbines. The arms received in return were of the Springfield pattern, and their condition may be judged from the fact that forty-two of them were pronounced unserviceable by the (brigade) inspector the day after they were turned over to my command. The men were dispirited, the officers were annoyed and chagrined, and the whole effect of the proceeding could not have failed to be embarrassing to any officer.¹²¹

Colonel Hawley, the commander of the brigade to which the 7th New Hampshire was attached, was also held in low regard because the exchange was not made with Hawley's own regiment, the 7th Connecticut.¹²² The regimental historian of the 7th New Hampshire reported that there was not a bayonet among them and thought that in one Company, I, thirty were unserviceable; in another Company, D, nineteen were deficient in either lock, hammer, or rammer and, "consequently were no more use to our soldiers than an equal number of fence stakes."¹²³ With half of the regiment armed with these almost useless weapons, and included among that unit some 300 new recruits, the 7th New Hampshire within the week would be assigned a key position in the Union lines at the battle of Olustee under Colonel Hawley as brigade commander.

With good reason to be optimistic over the success to date of the expedition, on February 13th, General Gillmore sent the following message to the Union General-in-Chief, Major General Halleck:

I intend to construct small works, capable of resisting a coup de main at Jacksonville, Baldwin, Palatka, and perhaps one or two other important points, so strong that 200 or 300 men will be sufficient at each point. Twenty-five hundred men, in addition to the two regiments that have been permanently stationed in this state (one at Saint Augustine and one at Fernandina), ought to be ample in Florida.

The artillery captured here will suffice for such defensive works as may be deemed necessary.

I desire to see the lumber and turpentine trade on the Saint John's revived by loyal men, and for that purpose, and to give assurance that our occupation of this river is intended to be permanent, I have written to the Secretary of the Treasury recommending that the Port of Jacksonville be declared open. The communication is herewith inclosed. I shall return to Hilton Head to-morrow, leaving General Seymour in command in Florida for the present.

Palatka will be occupied by our forces in a day or two.¹²⁴

This message contained the essence of General Gillmore's plan for Union operations in Florida. In a post-script, Gillmore enclosed a copy of Confederate Major White's "confidential notice" concerning Confederate food shortages and commissary requirements in Florida.¹²⁵

On February 13, Union Captain G. E. Marshall, with a picked force of forty-nine men from Companies G, H, and K of the 40th Massachusetts, left Sanderson for Gainesville, arriving there at 2 A.M. the morning of February 14. General Seymour's report of this raid, dated the 17th contained the following:

In accordance with instructions given to Captain Marshall, no private property was destroyed or molested. The public subsistence stores were distributed among the inhabitants, who were suffering for want of them. Probably \$1,000,000 worth of property fell into our hands, but it could not be removed and it was considered advisable to destroy it.¹²⁶

The importance of Gainesville was touched on by former Confederate cavalryman Lawrence Jackson:

Gainesville was an important military post . . . It was the headquarters for supplies and for blockade goods. Most of the places East of the Suwannee River was supplied from this point. Large droves of cattle were collected here and pastured on Paine's Prairie and driven North for the use of the army.

Camp Lee and the wagon yards were located just across Sweet Water Branch, to the left of the road leading to the cemetery, and just West of the branch were located the wagon yards, where were kept a large number of teams used for collecting supplies and distributing them to different points.¹²⁷

While Gainesville was not as important as other locations in east Florida, it was one of many collection points scattered throughout the state.

Captain Marshall's men had skirmished all night on the way to Gainesville and upon arriving put out pickets and sentries to prevent warning being given of the presence of the Union force. It was learned from a black that a Confederate cavalry force was near and a Confederate picket of two men was surprised and captured. A Confederate messenger, however, did get away and made contact with Captain W. E. Chamber's Company C, 2nd Florida Cavalry, at Newnansville where the unit had stopped on its way to Lake City. Captain Marshall, with about forty minutes of advance

notice and with the aid of a number of blacks erected a fortification made out of 167 cotton bales, barricading the egress roads leading through the town. Behind these cotton bales were placed the Union troopers armed with the seven-shot Spencer rifles.¹²⁸

Lawrence Jackson recalls that after getting word about the presence of the Yankees in Gainesville, Captain Chamber's cavalry company ate their dinner and then "leisurely" came back to Gainesville, stopping along the way many times.¹²⁹ About four miles from Gainesville, the Confederate cavalry linked up with Lieutenant Colonel Louis G. Pyles who headed a group of old men and boys. It was decided to approach the town by two roads, the cavalry on one, and Pyles's troops on the other. The force under Pyles never showed up, and the cavalry made a charge on the barricaded Union forces where they were repulsed by the superior Union firepower. The Confederate forces withdrew and did not return until the following morning after the Federal force had departed. Trooper Lawrence recalled:

Next morning the Captain marched the command back to Gainesville. where we learned that the enemy had taken their departure the night before leaving about ten o'clock. they left in good order we followed them half way to Waldo taking with them quite a number of negroes it was thought useless to follow them further as they had too much slack and they escaped to Jacksonville. We had in Chamber's command about one hundred and twenty of as good soldiers as there are in the army and the Yankees had about fifty all told. the outcome was anything but creditable to the officer in command of the Confederate forces. thus ended the first foray into this section of the country.¹³⁰

Oscar Sawyer of the New York Herald reported that thirty-six Negroes were brought to Jacksonville from Gainesville of which thirty-three enlisted.¹³¹

One immediate reaction by the Confederate forces to the Gainesville raid was the belief that the raiding force would hit Lake City next. To meet that threat, newly arrived units from Georgia were employed. Charles C. Jones, with the Chatham Artillery, described the events which had taken his unit from James Island to the defense of Lake City, Florida. His description is typical of the difficulties encountered by the Confederate forces that were shifted from Georgia to Florida to meet the Federal expedition:

On the night of the 8th of February, 1864, the Battery was ordered to march from its camp on James island to the depot of the Charleston and Savannah railroad, and there take cars for Savannah. The depot was reached at daylight on the morning of the 9th, and the Battery left for Savannah at ten o'clock A.M., reaching that city by twelve o'clock, P.M. The next day the company marched to its old encampment at White bluff, where it remained until the morning of the 12th, when it moved to the depot of the Atlantic and Gulf rail road and took the cars the same day for Valdosta, en route for Florida. Arriving at Valdosta at four o'clock A.M., on the 13th, the Battery proceeded immediately to Madison, Florida, which point was reached on the morning of the 14th. The same evening it was transported by rail to Lake City, where it arrived at three o'clock, A.M. on the morning of the 15th.¹³²

The Chatham Artillery and the 6th Georgia were immediately ordered to a blocking position some twelve miles south of Lake City where a strong line of pickets had been established to prevent the Federal force from hitting Lake City and destroying the bridge at Columbia.¹³³ They remained there

until the 17th when they were recalled to Lake City and directed to report to Olustee.¹³⁴

While the raid on Gainesville was taking place, a second Union raid was underway from Barber's towards the Georgia line. It was to be a two pronged attack towards King's Ferry. One force composed of elements of Henry's mounted brigade supported by infantry was to leave from Barber's, while a second force composed of elements from the 97th Pennsylvania supported by gun-boats was to leave from Fernandina.

Colonel Henry's force, which included the 115th New York infantry, three companies of the Independent Battalion's cavalry, and one gun of Captain Elder's horse battery, left on the morning of the 14th towards Callahan Station near the Georgia line to "scour the country," destroy the railroad, and burn some ferry boats.¹³⁵ They marched some twenty-five miles the first day, mostly through swamp and water. Leaving their blankets and coats under guard the next morning, the force continued on to Callahan where they accomplished their mission, returning to their previous night's camping spot. The following morning, they started on the return trip, with rations scarce and the men worn out. as Clark described it:

The men were all tired out, our feet were bleeding, and every soldier declared that they could not go a single inch farther.¹³⁶

A stop was made and a council of officers held to decide whether to continue or stop. The decision was made to

continue because of the danger of stopping. The force returned to Barber's that night but:

Our march had been so rapid, that the cavalry and artillery horses were worn out, and many had dropped dead along the road.¹³⁷

Some three days later, this force would be involved in the battle of Olustee. The account of this wing of the raiding force left by Sergeant Clement of the Independent Battalion Massachusetts Cavalry was shorter but included results:

While the main body was resting at Barber's Ford, a detachment was sent out, February 14, towards King's Ferry, Ga. Arriving next day, they met the enemy's cavalry, which they drove off. They destroyed two ferry boats and the telegraph station, and came back to Barber's Ford, February 17.¹³⁸

The objectives of the raiding force from Fernandina were more extensive. On the 15th, Major Pennypacker, with 300 men from the 97th Pennsylvania departed Fernandina with the mission of getting to Woodstock Mills and King's Ferry Mills on the St. Marys River to procure lumber that was stored there and a mill gearing to be used in the Department of the South.¹³⁹ After travelling thirty-three miles without detection, they got to King's Ferry Mills about sunset, arriving at about the same time as did Major Atherton Steven's Independent Battalion coming from Barber's. The next day the men of the 97th started to build rafts with the lumber. Major Brooks, of General Seymour's staff, arrived on the 16th with another 200 men of the 97th aboard the transports (one of which, the Harriet Weed, carried three guns) and the mortar schooner Para. The raiding force and

vessels stayed at King's Ferry Mills until the 20th, finding some 700,000 board feet of prepared pine at the ferry and, about six miles further up the river, an additional 800,000 board feet.¹⁴⁰ Half of this lumber had been rafted, towed, or carried on the decks of steamers down to Fernandina within five days.¹⁴¹

While at the Mills, Major Pennypacker sent Captain Lewis and Company F on a raid over on the Georgia side of the river to cut the telegraph communications between Savannah and Tallahassee. This line had been cut before in one or two places but communications had been resumed by new and temporary connections that had eluded discovery. Captain Lewis's men followed the telegraph line for fifteen miles from Trader's Hill before discovering a point where a wire branched off into a hollow tree so close to the line as to almost defy detection. The wire led from the roots of the tree into a swamp and from there by a concealed route to reconnect beyond the part that had been destroyed.¹⁴² Another accomplishment of the raid was the capture by Major Pennypacker of a notorious guerilla, Captain Wilds. When in Union custody, the man denied being who they said he was, but on the testimony of one of his former slaves who said, "You tink [sic] I don't know you when you own me so long," he recanted.¹⁴³ Major Pennypacker's expedition was cut short by the news of Olustee, and he returned with his men to Fernandina.

On February 14, orders were issued at Union Headquarters for the Department of the South on Folly Island, South Carolina, detailing the 1st North Carolina Volunteers and 55th Massachusetts along with Hamilton's Battery to report to General Seymour at Jacksonville. The two regiments were not at full strength as explained in a message signed by Brigadier General Alfred H. Terry:

In the two regiments last named I found a considerable number of men sick with the small-pox, and a still larger number who had been exposed to contagion. All these men I retained here with one medical and one other officer from each regiment to command and care for them.¹⁴⁴

On February 14, General Beauregard's headquarters at Charleston directed General Gilmer at Savannah to send Anderson's 5th Georgia Cavalry from Green Pond to Florida via Trader's Hill.¹⁴⁵ Later that afternoon another order from General Beauregard to General Gilmer directed that Colonel Colquitt's brigade be sent to General Finegan at Lake City "as soon as possible by the shortest route."¹⁴⁶ General Finegan was then sent a message telling him that if he needed more artillery, he was to request it from General Gardner commanding middle Florida; Gardner was told to have light artillery ready for Finegan's request.¹⁴⁷

On the 15th of February, General Order Number 24 of the Union's Department of the South was issued. It stated:

Loyal people, and such as desire to become so under the provisions of the President's proclamation of December 8, 1863, who are now absent from their homes in East Florida, are invited to return there and resume their usual avocations. It is the intentions of

the United States Government, and wholly within its power, to afford them all needful protection.¹⁴⁸

The order went on to admonish all officers to "enforce in the strictest manner, and under the severest penalties, all existing orders and regulations forbidding the destruction or pillage of private property."¹⁴⁹ The entire Federal operation, in fact, was being conducted under the strictest limitations on any conduct that might alienate the local Floridians. One correspondent accompanying the expedition commented on this "kid gloves" policy:

But this is not our worst mistake. The policy of conciliation, adopted here, did not allow our officers to levy any contributions upon the country for the support of the army. The most stringent orders were issued in regard to touching, under any circumstances, private property. A captain was put in arrest for permitting his men, who were doing duty on an extreme outpost, to kill a pig for their supper. . . . I learn that this officer's name has been sent to the President with a recommendation that he be summarily dismissed from the Service.¹⁵⁰

One can only wonder how General William T. Sherman would have operated under this policy in Georgia or whether the 1864 Federal expedition would have been more successful had they been permitted to "live off the land" and not be tied to supply by wagon while waiting for a working locomotive.

Another general order created the district of Florida to include that portion of Florida within the responsibility of the Department of the South and placed this district under command of General Seymour.¹⁵¹ This was the move that Tax Commissioner Stickney had desired for his friend General Saxton with the intention of profiting from that appointment.

On February 16, without any preliminary warning, General Seymour suddenly notified General Gillmore that he planned to move and had called up the 47th New York and 3rd U. S. Colored Troops to Baldwin. He requested that Gillmore send the 7th New Hampshire to Baldwin, the 8th U. S. Colored Troops to Pickett's, and that Colonel Edward N. Hallowell (54th Massachusetts) send two or three companies to Camp Finegan.¹⁵² In a second message to General Gillmore, written the same day, General Seymour demonstrated an understanding of Gillmore's concept of the expedition:

The proposed system about being established for movements in Florida consists essentially of a well secured base, with a strong movable column to push well in advance and to be kept constantly active. The command of this advanced force is consequently of great importance, and that it should be in the hands of an officer of approved judgement and experience. It will be impossible for me to remain with it constantly, and I earnestly request that a brigadier-general on whom I can rely may be ordered to me for this purpose.¹⁵³

General Seymour went on to request a Colonel Morgan from the subsistence department head that advanced force because he was a Southerner and would therefore be effective.¹⁵⁴ There had been no indication up to this time of any dissatisfaction with Colonel Henry's command of the advanced force. General Seymour continued in a statement that was directly contradictory to what he had only recently said:

There is but little doubt in my mind that the people of this State, kindly treated by us, will soon be ready to return to the Union. They are heartily tired of the war; and such an officer as Colonel Morgan can assist me materially in bring about this end.¹⁵⁵

General Seymour finished by suggesting that if Colonel Morgan was not available, General Ames be sent to him because "the necessity of having somebody in front is so great that I trust General Ames will be sent immediately, if only temporarily."¹⁵⁵ Although there were a number of experienced generals within the Department of the South, all of the brigades of Seymour's force were commanded by colonels with little, if any, experience commanding brigades in combat. This would prove costly.

On the February 17, after General Gillmore had returned to his Headquarters at Hilton Head, South Carolina, General Seymour sent him a bombshell. He started off by calling attention to the difficulties of resupply because of the absence of the locomotive and then went on to say:

Not enough supplies have accumulated to permit me to execute my intentions of moving to the Suwannee River. But now I propose to without supplies, even if compelled to retrace my step to procure them, and with the objective of destroying the railroad near the Suwannee that there will be no danger of carrying away any portion of the track.¹⁵⁷

Seymour informed Gillmore that he would be "in motion by the time you receive this" and requested a naval demonstration be made in front of Savannah as a diversion to prevent Confederate reinforcements being sent from that area.¹⁵⁸ Seymour went on to request sufficient saddles be sent to mount the 7th New Hampshire and gave his troop dispositions as follows:

I have sent for the Twenty-fourth Massachusetts to come to this point; the Tenth Connecticut (eight companies)

to remain at Saint Augustine, two companies to go to Picolata. I shall not occupy Palatka or Magnolia at this moment; when I do portions of the Twenty-fourth Massachusetts will be sent from Jacksonville. The Fifty-fifth Massachusetts will remain here for the present or until the Twenty-fourth relieves it. The Second South Carolina and Third U. S. Colored Troops are at Camp Shaw (late Finegan) for instruction and organization. The First North Carolina will be left at Baldwin, detaching three companies to Barber's. Colonel Barton will have the Forty-seventh, Forty-eighth, and One hundred and fifteenth; Colonel Hawley will have the Seventh Connecticut, Seventh New Hampshire, and Eighth U. S. Colored Troops; Colonel Montgomery the Third United States and the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts; Colonel Henry the cavalry and Elder's battery; Captain Hamilton the artillery. As soon as possible Metcalf's section will be sent back; at present I should like to use it.¹⁵⁹

Colonel Guss of the 97th Pennsylvania was ordered to keep six companies in motion from Fernandina constantly and at least five days out of seven toward and beyond Camp Cooper. Seymour closed with a request to expedite repairs on the needed locomotive and to be sent a printing press because:

The prompt use of a locomotive and of a printing press with this movement were of the most vital importance, and will continue to be so. I trust both will soon be economized.¹⁶⁰

General Gillmore, stunned upon receipt of General Seymour's letter, immediately dashed off a reply and sent it in the personal hands of his chief-of-staff, Brigadier General J.W. Turner, to Seymour. Gillmore called attention to his plan of operations and his last instructions which were to hold Baldwin and the South Fork of the St. Marys for the present. He then cited a number of statements Seymour had previously made about the futility of the operation and the chances for restoring Florida to the Union. Confessing to be very much

confused over what Seymour was doing, Gillmore closed by telling Seymour to comply with the instructions he had last been given before Gillmore left Florida.¹⁶¹

Unfortunately for the Union, General Turner's ship ran into bad weather, and he did not arrive with General Gillmore's letter until after the battle of Olustee had been fought and lost. Much mystery surrounds this sudden change of mind by General Seymour. Colonel Hawley, writing later about the battle stated:

At Baldwin, a night or two before the battle, General Seymour called together six or eight of his officers for consultation. Some were cautious, others were outspoken, but it was decidedly the general opinion that it would be impossible to hold permanently a position out toward the center of the State, having for its line of communication a rickety railroad with one engine running fifty or sixty miles back to the base at Jacksonville. It would take more than our little army simply to hold the line against the force that would certainly soon be collected against us. The Confederates could have ruined us by letting us march one more day without interruption and then sitting down on the railroad between us and home with their rapidly increasing force. Most of us thought it would be sufficient to make the St. John's our main western line, but Seymour thought it his duty to go on.¹⁶²

Another theory as to why General Seymour changed his mind so suddenly has to do with a plan that General Seymour had submitted to Senator Ira Harris from New York state on January 12, 1864, a month before the Florida expedition.¹⁶³ The plan suggested an amphibious landing, a march inland of forty miles, and an attack on the key railroad junction at Branchville, South Carolina, that would divide the Confederacy in only "less consequence than was the opening of

the Mississippi."¹⁶⁴ The Branchville rail junction would be fortified and the Confederates forced to attack it at a disadvantage. Lee's army, in the meantime, would be isolated from the rest of the Confederacy, and South Carolina would be converted into the new battlefield of the war. The plan was pure George B. McClellan and had good probability of success at the time of the Port Royal expedition in 1862. In sending the plan to Senator Harris, Seymour asked that it be brought to the attention of the president or the secretary of war. Seymour suggested that General Gillmore, commanding the Department of the South, would be in favor of it but the impression is given that Seymour was going out of channels and over Gillmore's head.¹⁶⁵ Assigned to the Florida expedition, General Seymour might have become disenchanted with being bogged down on an operation that was smaller in scale and strategically less important than the one he had proposed. He might also have used the same reasoning he used in proposing the Branchville operation that the bridge over the Suwannee would also separate parts of the Confederacy by disrupting internal lines of communication. A third possibility is the belief that Seymour had that the iron to be removed from the Florida rail system was to be used in Virginia. Seymour might have thought that the rail would be used to build another connector line to parallel the line through Branchville, rendering that objective less important and therefore the plan he submitted to Senator Harris, less

important. No one knows for certain why Seymour suddenly decided to disregard Gillmore's orders and strike out towards the Suwannee. The proposed plan he sent to Senator Harris does, however, indicate he was not above going out of channels and promoting his own future.

Confederate reinforcements, in the meantime, had been converging on Lake City. General Finegan's reports show this: on February 11, he had 600 infantry and cavalry and two guns, on the 13th he had 2,250 infantry and cavalry and 10 guns, by the 19th, he had amassed 5,200 infantry and cavalry and three batteries containing twelve guns.¹⁶⁶ Starting on February 13 General Finegan had undertaken to construct a defensive position near Olustee Station. He was greatly aided by Lieutenant M. B. Grant, C. S. Engineers, who arrived at Olustee Station on the evening of February 17, having left Savannah two days earlier. Grant found the army encamped on a line extending from Ocean Pond on the left to a large cypress pond on the right. The position had been selected by General Finegan as the best defensive position between the South Fork of the St. Marys and Lake City because the combination of swamps and bodies of water restricted movement to a narrow front.¹⁶⁷ Lieutenant Grant's map (Figure 8-1) was done after having been at the battle and walked the ground and is considered highly accurate.¹⁶⁸ It will help the reader to refer to it during the description of the Confederate defensive position at Olustee and the battle

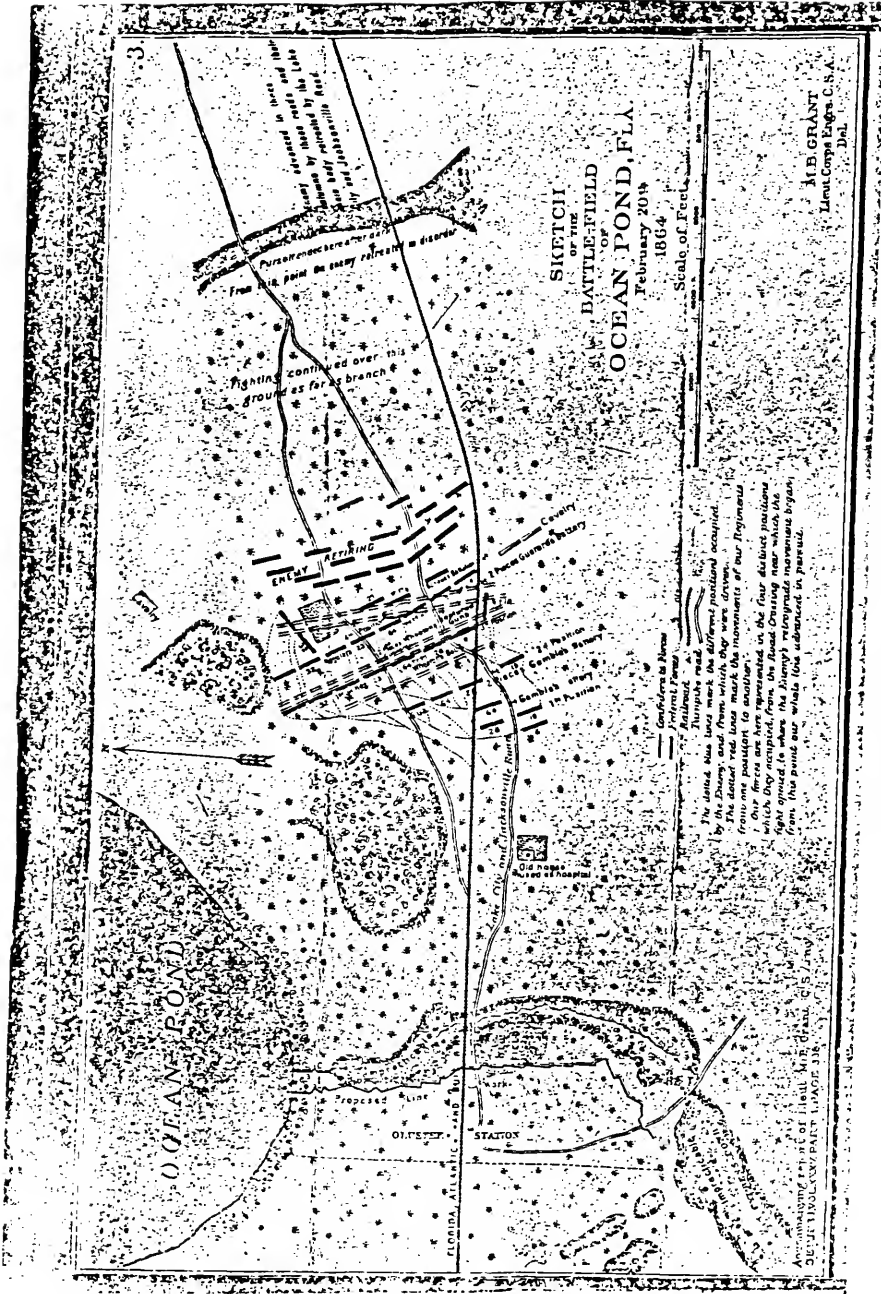


Figure 8-1. Grant's Sketch of the Ocean Pond Battlefield. Source: ORA, pt. I, p. 338.

which took place on the 20th. Lieutenant Grant described the country and the defensive position:

I would here remark that the country along the line of railroad from the Suwannee River east is exceeding low and flat, with but few streams. and those of so insignificant a character as to be of little assistance to a defense or obstacle to an advance; in fact, the only natural features which could be taken advantage of for purposes of defense are the bays and ponds which are to be found to a greater or lesser degree throughout this entire section of country.¹⁶⁹

In the absence of any other engineering officer, Lieutenant Grant was put in charge of constructing a defensive position, which he started after impressing slaves and tools for a work force. Although trying hard to make the defensive emplacement formidable, Lieutenant Grant commented later on the value of such a position in the type of terrain in which it was located:

This line of works, had they been complete, would have proven very strong against a direct attack, but it was liable to the same difficulty which presents itself in the occupation of any position in this country, viz, the practicability of turning it by a detour of a few miles.¹⁷⁰

The defensive works were not completed when the battle of Olustee took place some two and one quarter miles in front of the position.

The concentration of Confederate troops was remarkable considering the different points they came from and the distance some of them travelled. An example of this difficulty is given in the following account by Major George C. Gratten who was the adjutant-general of Colquitt's Brigade:

Upon the morning of the 16th of February, 1864, General Colquitt left Savannah with four regiments of his brigade, viz: the 19th, 23rd, 27th, and 28th Georgia Regiments--the 6th Georgia having already moved forward. We were transported in the cars of the Atlantic and Gulf railroad to Station Number Nine, arriving there in the night. The next morning early, we commenced marching across the country to Madison, Florida, taking with us no baggage except our cooking utensils, and such as the men could carry in their knapsacks. We halted in the evening at a river some ten or twelve miles from Madison, and went into camp. About twelve o'clock at night Gen. Colquitt received a dispatch from Gen. Finegan stating that the enemy were advancing, and requesting him to move as rapidly as possible. Gen. Colquitt immediately ordered his command forward, and we reached Madison the next morning at sunrise, having marched over thirty miles in twenty-four hours without leaving a man by the road side. Trains of cars were in readiness at Madison, and we moved on as soon as the troops could be put aboard. As we passed through Lake City we were joined by the 6th Georgia Regiment. We arrived at Olustee Station the same evening, February 18th, and there learned that the reported advance of the enemy consisted of a body of cavalry which had turned towards the south, after destroying some depots, etc. During the entire day after our arrival at Olustee we were quiet, and the troops enjoyed a good opportunity to rest.¹⁷¹

On the February 19, General Finegan had the following units present at Olustee Station and organized into two brigades as follows (strength figures used are those reported for the units on January 23, 1864, and are used only to give an impression of the approximate size of the units on the day of the battle):

First Brigade - Colonel A Colquitt

6th Georgia	10 Companies	618
19th Georgia	10 Companies	591
23rd Georgia	10 Companies	590
27th Georgia	10 Companies	605
28th Georgia	10 Companies	538
6th Florida Battalion	unknown	unk.

Second Brigade - Colonel G.P. Harrison

32nd Georgia	10 Companies	1,036
64th Georgia	10 Companies	746
1st Georgia Regulars	10 Companies	800
1st Florida Battalion	unknown	unk.
Guerard's Battery	1 Company	104

Reserves

4th Georgia Cavalry	10	933
2nd Florida cavalry	Unknown	unk.
Florida (Leon) Light Artillery	Unknown	unk.
Chatham Artillery	1 Company	111
Florida(Milton) Light Artillery (-) ¹⁷²	Unknown	unk.

It should be noted that the Florida 5th Cavalry arrived on the 20th, having been in Gainesville the night before, and was in poor shape after its forced march to get to Olustee. It would be committed late in the battle. General Finegan stated that by February 20, his effective force consisted of eight regiments and three or four battalions of infantry (some question exists of whether the 2nd Florida Battalion was present), two regiments and one battalion of cavalry, and three batteries of artillery. In strength, 4,600 infantry, less than 500 cavalry, and three batteries of artillery containing twelve guns. General Seymour, by the evening of the 19th, had arrived back at Barber's where he had concentrated eight infantry regiments, one mounted infantry regiment, a cavalry battalion, and three batteries and one section of artillery, in all, some 5,500 officers and men and sixteen guns.¹⁷³

Both sides were approximately equal in strength, although both commanders would fight the battle thinking they were heavily out numbered. Neither commander took any

significant steps to gather current information on the strength or disposition of his opponent. On the evening of the 19th, General Finegan was committed to the occupation and defense of a partially completed line of entrenchments at Olustee Station. On the same evening, General Seymour was preparing to make a sudden advance against an enemy believed to number about 4,000 to 5,000 located at Lake City, and then push his mounted force to destroy the railroad bridge over the Suwannee River, some thirty miles beyond Lake City. Neither was preparing to fight a battle of the size that would take place the next day, or even considering the location where it did take place as a possible site for an engagement.

Notes

¹ ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 280.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Benjamin W. Crowninshield, A History of the First Regiment of Massachusetts Cavalry Volunteers (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1891), p. 258.

⁵ ORA I:35, Pt. I, p. 280.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 280-281.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., p. 321.

- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid., p. 476.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 George Bowerem, "From the Florida Expedition", New York Tribune, February 20, 1864, p. 1, cols. 1-3.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 ORA I:35, Pt. 1, pp. 321-322.
- 24 Ibid., p. 110.
- 25 Ibid., p. 579.
- 26 Ibid., p. 322.
- 27 Ibid., p. 579.
- 28 Ibid., p. 581.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid., p. 110.
- 34 Ibid., p. 557.

35 Ibid., p. 579.

36 Ibid., p. 322.

37 Ibid., p. 281.

38 Ibid., p. 475.

39 Ibid., p. 477.

40 Ibid.

41 New York Tribune, February 20, 1864.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Crowninshield, History of the First Regiment, p. 260.

46 New York Tribune, February 20, 1864.

47 ORA I:35, Pt.I, pp. 336-337.

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49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

52 James H. Clark, The Iron Hearted Regiment: Being An Account of the Battles, Marches, and Gallant Deeds Performed by the 115th Regiment N.Y. Vols. (Albany: J. Munsell, 1865), pp. 71-72.

53 Ibid. p. 73.

54 New York Tribune, February 20, 1864.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

58 ORA I:53, p. 35.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

62 Isiah Price, History of the Ninety-Seventh Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry During the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865, With Biographic Sketches of its Field and Staff Officers and a Complete Record of Each Officer and Enlisted Man (Philadelphia: Isiah Price, 1875), pp. 234-235.

63 Alfred Roman, Beauregard, p. 447.

64 Wendell D. Croom, The War History of Company "C" (Beauregard Volunteers) Sixth Georgia Regiment, (Infantry) With A Graphic Account of Each Member (Fort Valley: Printed at the Advertiser Office, 1879), p. 22.

65 ORA I:35, Pt. I, p. 472.

66 New York Tribune, February 20, 1864.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 Crowninshield, History of the First Regiment pp. 260-261.

71 Clark, The Iron Hearted Regiment, pp. 75-76.

72 New York Tribune, February 20, 1864.

73 Ibid.

74 Winston Stevens to Octavia Stephens, February 11, 1864, Stephens Papers, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville.

75 ORA I:35, Pt. I, p. 325.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid., pp. 594-595.

78 Ibid., pp. 294-295.

79 Ibid., p. 473.

- 80 Ibid., p. 472.
- 81 Ibid.
- 82 Ibid., pp. 473-474.
- 83 New York Tribune, February 20, 19864.
- 84 Ibid.
261. 85 Crowninshield, History of the First Regiment, p.
- 86 New York Tribune, February 20, 1864.
- 87 Ibid.
- 88 Clark, The Iron Hearted Regiment, pp. 77-78.
- 89 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 325.
- 90 Ibid.
- 91 Ibid., p. 600.
- 92 Ibid., pp. 281-282.
- 93 Ibid.
- 94 Ibid.
- 95 Lester L. Swift, ed., "Capt. Dana in Florida: A Narrative of the Seymour Expedition," Civil War History 11 (September, 1965): 248.
- 96 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 282.
- 97 Ibid.
- 98 Ibid.
- 99 Ibid., p. 474
- 100 Ibid., p. 600.
- 101 Ibid.
- 102 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 12.
- 103 Ibid., pp. 13-14.

- 104 Ibid., p. 386.
- 105 Ibid., p. 619.
- 106 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 11.
- 107 Ibid.
- 108 Ibid.
- 109 ORA I:35, Pt.I, pp. 283-284.
- 110 Ibid.
- 111 ORA I:53, pp. 99-100.
- 112 Ibid., p. 100.
- 113 Ibid.
- 114 Ibid.
- 115 ORA I:35, Pt. I, p. 475.
- 116 Ibid., p. 479.
- 117 Ibid., 372.
- 118 Ibid., p. 35.
- 119 Ibid., p. 479.
- 120 Ibid.

121 Henry F. W. Little, The Seventh Regiment New Hampshire Volunteers In The War of The Rebellion (Concord: Ira C. Evans, 1896), p.218.

- 122 Ibid., p. 217.
- 123 Ibid.
- 124 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 293.
- 125 Ibid.
- 126 Ibid., p. 296.

* 127 Lawrence Jackson, "Memoirs of the Battle of Olustee Fought in February, 1864," Edward C. F. Sanchez Papers 1825-1879, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville.

128 New York Herald, March 1, 1864.

129 Lawrence Jackson, "Memoirs of the Battle of Olustee."

130 Ibid.

131 New York Herald, March 1, 1864.

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133 Ibid.

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135 Clark, The Iron Hearted Regiment, pp. 79-80.

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- 153 ORA I:53, p. 101.
- 154 Ibid.
- 155 Ibid.
- 156 Ibid.
- 157 ORA I:35. Pt. I, pp. 284-285.
- 158 Ibid.
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- 161 Ibid., pp. 285-286.
- 162 Joseph Hawley's comments on Samuel Jones, "The Battle of Olustee or Ocean Pond," Johnson and Buell eds., Battles And leaders, Vol. IV, p. 79.
- 163 ORA I:53, pp. 95-98.
- 164 Ibid.
- 165 Ibid.
- 166 George F. Baltzell, Colonel, U.S.A., "The Battle of Olustee," Florida Historical Quarterly 9 (April,1931): 207.
- 167 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 338.
- 168 Ibid.
- 179 Charles C. Jones, Historical Sketch of the Chatham Artillery, pp. 178-179.
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172 Ibid. p. 288

173 Ibid.

CHAPTER IX
THE BATTLE OF OLUSTEE

The First Stage

On February 20, 1864, the Union forces departed Barber's Ford before 7 A.M. in fine weather under a clear sky with the golden sunlight starting to filter through the pines.¹ In a column of brigades, they headed westward on the Lake City and Jacksonville Road. The order of march (with unit strengths where known) was:

Advance Guard:

Colonel Guy V. Henry's Mounted Brigade

40th Massachusetts Mounted Infantry with the 1st
Massachusetts Independent Cavalry attached
(Major Atherton Stevens)
Battery B, 1st U. S. Artillery (four pieces)
(Elder's Horse Battery)

Main Body:

Colonel J.R. Hawley's Brigade

7th Connecticut (Captain Skinner), ten officers.
365 men reorganized into four companies)
7th New Hampshire (Colonel J. C. Abbott), thirty
officers, 675 men.
8th U. S. Colored Troops (Colonel C. W. Fribley),
twenty-two officers, 532 men
Battery E, 3rd U. S. Artillery (six pieces)
(Captain Hamilton).

Col W .B. Barton's Brigade

47th New York (Colonel H. Moore)
48th New York (Major W. B. Cone)
115th New York (Colonel J. Sammon)

Battery M, 1st U. S. Artillery (four pieces)
 (Captain Loomis Langdon with Section Battery
 C, 3rd Rhode Island Heavy Artillery (two
 pieces) (Lieutenant Eddy)

The trains and medical vehicles

Colonel James Montgomery's Brigade

1st North Carolina, Colored (Lieutenant Colonel
 W. N. Reed)
 54th Massachusetts, Colored (Colonel E. N.
 Hallowell) thirteen officers, 480 men

In all, there were some 5,500 men and sixteen pieces of
 artillery.

Colonel Henry's Brigade soon outdistanced the marching
 elements. There appeared to be no expectation of meeting the
 enemy in force from the speed of the advance and the
 comparative lack of security precautions. One observer who
 was present noted:

Onward, with all possible speed onward was the
 spirit which ruled the hour. Much of the artillery,
 and the guns of whole companies were empty but, as
 if this was a matter of little or no importance,
 onward was the order. It is the strangest thing in
 the world that this was so. The enemy's advanced-
 guard, retreating precipitately on the approach of our
 force, was but a repetition of what we had witnessed
 all the way from Jacksonville to near Lake City.
 This had been done so frequently that it appeared to
 be the established order of things with the Florida
 soldiers. Our policy had been to dash after them,
 and capture and scatter as many as possible. We had
 met with no repulse and few casualties. Our successes
 had unfortunately inspired us with a contempt for our
 foes. A battle commenced, unexpectedly and without
 preparation, must be fought to great disadvantage.²

Walt Whittemore of the New York Times noted:

It may be offered as an objection that the column
 was without flankers. The only source through which
 any intimation of the enemy's presence could be
 received was the advance cavalry-guard. It would

certainly be called a military failing to move a column of troops without the proper flankers through any portion of the enemy's country even if positive information had been obtained that the enemy was a long distance off.³

There were several possible explanations for the speed of the movement but absolutely no excuse for the lack of security. Whittemore, who had noted the lack of flank security, also noted in his account that on the day before, Friday the 19th, no one, including General Seymour, supposed that an advance would be made for a few days. This was evidenced by the activities of the men and officers in constructing shelters and other conveniences to provide additional comfort, something that certainly would not have been done were an immediate move expected.⁴ "Sometime during the night General Seymour received information of the enemy's whereabouts and plans which led him to believe that by pushing rapidly forward his column, he would be able to defeat the enemy's designs and secure important military advantages. Whatever that information may have been, the events of Saturday would indicate it was by no means reliable, or that General Seymour acted upon it with too much haste. . . ."⁵ Several other writers who were present on the expedition noted that General Seymour expected to meet the enemy forces at Lake City, and one believed that he was looking to an encounter at the Suwannee River.⁶ General Seymour, in a report written two days after the battle stated

On the morning of February 20, I moved from Barber's, with all the disposable force at my control,

with the intention of meeting the enemy (supposed to be from 4,000 to 5,000 strong, according to the best information I could obtain) at or near Lake City, and of then pushing my mounted force to the Suwannee River, to destroy if possible, the railroad bridge at that stream.⁷

Lieutenant Eddy, 3rd Rhode Island Artillery, writing from a bed aboard the hospital ship Cosmopolitan two days after the Olustee battle, wrote, "On Saturday morning, the twentieth, at seven o'clock, we started once more for a place called Lake City, thirty-six miles distant, which, if we had succeeded in occupying, we should have stopped supplies being sent to the Western armies of the enemy."⁸ On the southern side, Lieutenant M. B. Grant, believed the reason that the Federal troops were advancing so rapidly was probably because they believed the Confederate forces were no larger than what had been met by Colonel Henry's force the week previous near Lake City.⁹ While passing through Sanderson, General Seymour had received word that he would meet enemy forces in strength east of Lake City. Oscar Sawyer of the New York Herald wrote, "Here [Sanderson] the most positive statements were made as to the large force which awaited the Unionists not more than ten Miles beyond."¹⁰ General Seymour discounted the information as dubious regarding strength and position because the Rebels were not thought capable of concentrating that quickly. He therefore, apparently, chose to disregard it as unreliable.¹¹

While eating lunch in Sanderson at the house of Mrs. Canova, where the general and his staff had stopped about 2

P.M. on the 20th, Mrs. Canova was "very saucy and said, 'You will come back faster than you go' which we took to be a brag."¹² During this meal, the opening shots of the battle were heard.¹³ A correspondent who accompanied the expedition wrote:

When General Seymour left . . . he expected to fight a battle near Lake City, the twenty-first, and not before. This impression seems to have seized his mind, and clung to it with the force of fatality. Native Floridians insisted that, near Olustee, Finnigan [sic] and Gardner had collected an army much larger than our own. All these statements seemed to make no impression on his mind.¹⁴

Sergeant Clement of the Massachusetts Independent Cavalry believed the expedition was compromised before it even started. He wrote:

We lay at Barber's Ford a full week, during which time our camp was full of bogus "Union" Floridians, and fully twenty of them were there on the Friday night when evident preparations were made for another advance. In fact, everybody knew of it two days before, and in this way, if no other, the rebels got the information which led them to send down their regiments from Charleston and Savannah.¹⁵

While he was in partial error on his latter point, it certainly reveals a lack of security on the part of the Union commanders. For that matter, General Finegan was equally lax in his security having made little effort at using his cavalry forces for reconnaissance or maintenance of contact with the main elements of the Union forces until just a few hours before the battle began.

Colonel Hawley's brigade, in a formation composed of four columns of regiments abreast centered on the Lake City

road, departed Barber's Ford at 7 A.M., following shortly behind Henry's mounted brigade. Hamilton's battery was on the road with the 7th New Hampshire and the 7th Connecticut to the right of the road and the 8th U. S. Colored Troops to its left. This order was followed for about five miles until just before Sanderson when the 7th Connecticut was ordered by Colonel Hawley into the road to keep in advance of the rest of the Brigade by about one half mile.¹⁶ Colonel Hawley later reported that "2 or 3 miles beyond Sanderson we came upon Colonel Henry's command, apparently arranged for a bivouac."¹⁷ The New York Times correspondent reported that at the point where the two Union units met, Henry's command had been halted by "a party of five mounted rebels who were stationed behind an old desterted mill, a little to the left of the wood."¹⁸ At this location, the road which was south of the railroad crossed the railroad to the northern side to avoid a swamp. Whittemore noted the time as 2 o'clock.¹⁹

Henry's Light Brigade had been facing scattered mounted resistance on the approach march since an hour after departing Barber's Ford. At 1 P.M. a halt had been called to allow the infantry to come up. While the brigade rested, Company D of the 1st Massachusetts Independent Cavalry, Henry's brigade, was advanced about one half mile to a point where the highway crossed the railroad. The picket line was laid out and the men posted. One of its members saw only one rebel cavalryman in sight, and he was "at a safe distance, on

the railroad track."²⁰ Two hours later, the same rebel cavalryman remained there for General Seymour to see.²¹ However, there was a growing realization that the enemy were present in great force.

First we saw and counted, as one by one they jumped across the railroad, over one hundred infantrymen. We saw their long rifles flash in the sunlight. They were after the left of our thin picket line. Presently, they opened on us, and kept it up until our men were hard pressed all along the line. From the extreme right, on the highway, came in Corporal Dennet, and minutely described how he had seen not less than three regiments march by a commanding officer whom all the regimental officers saluted. One can see a long distance through those forests of big pines, entirely free from undergrowth.²²

The report was disregarded by General Seymour who continued his two lead regiments moving forward in a skirmish line formation.

On the morning of February 20th, the Confederate forces were located in the vicinity of the entrenchments that were under construction at Olustee. Upon receiving a report that the Union forces were advancing from the east, Colonel Caraway Smith, commanding the Confederate cavalry brigade, was ordered to advance and meet them to determine their position and number.²³ One of the cavalry units that had just arrived had been in Gainesville on the day before the battle. Writing some years after the war, Lawrence Jackson of the 2nd Florida Cavalry recalled:

On the evening of the 19th of February, we left Gainesville for Olustee and camped that night at Mud Mills, on the south side of the Santa Fe River, in Alachua County; started out at daylight for Olustee,

which was about 35 miles distant. We had made about 15 or 16 miles when we began to hear the sound of cannon. Our officer Col. A. H. McCormick, ordered us to strike gallop, which we did, every man anxious to get there and do his part.²⁴

Just prior to going into battle, Lieutenant Colonel McCormick halted the unit. According to Jackson:

He rode down to about the middle of the regiment and faced us; he pulled off his hat, raised himself as high as he could in his stirrups and spoke loudly and distinctly, saying,

"Comrades and soldiers of the 2nd Florida cavalry, we are going into this fight to win. Although we are fighting five or six to one, we will die but never surrender. General Seamore's [sic] army is made up largely of negroes from Georgia and South Carolina, who come here to steal, pillage, run over the state and murder, kill, and rape our wives, daughters, and sweethearts. Let's teach them a lesson. I shall not take any negro prisoners in this fight."²⁵

Taking all of the cavalry available, 250 men of the 4th Georgia under Colonel Duncan L. Clinch and 202 men of the 2nd Florida under Lieutenant Colonel McCormick, Colonel Smith moved forward and made contact with the Union forces "about four miles from our encampment occupying in force the second crossing of the railroad from Olustee."²⁶ Smith immediately reported this position to General Finegan and then directed Colonel Clinch to advance skirmishers from his unit to attack the enemy's picketts. At 10 o'clock that morning, Colonel George P. Harrison of the 32nd Georgia, commanding the Confederate 2nd Brigade, was in the entrenchments near Olustee Station. At twelve noon, he was instructed by General Finegan to send forward the 64th Georgia under Colonel J. W. Evans and two companies (H and E) of the 32nd

Georgia under Captain Mobley to meet the enemy, then reported three miles to the front, to engage them lightly, and fall back, drawing them on to the main Confederate defensive position.²⁷ Shortly after noon, Colonel Colquitt received a written order from General Finegan to take the 6th and 28th Georgia regiments, the 6th Florida battalion, and a section of two guns from Gamble's Florida battery and "proceed to the front and drive the enemy's cavalry from the railroad which they were reported to be tearing up at a point some distance below Olustee."²⁸ Colonel Colquitt was just about to start forward from Olustee when he received another order directing Colonel Harrison to send to him the 32nd Georgia and 1st Georgia Regulars. The Chatham Artillery (Captain John F. Wheaton) and the 23rd Georgia were ordered to the front at the same time. Colonel Colquitt moved forward with the first group of units giving orders for the others to follow on as soon as they could be formed.²⁹ Colonel Colquitt's adjutant-general Major George C. Gratten described the movement as follows:

After marching about four miles from Olustee we perceived the 64th Georgia Regiment drawn up in a square, just in the rear of of the point where the wagon road crosses the railroad. Col. Colquitt galloped ahead and inquiring the condition of affairs, was informed by Lieut. Col. Barrow that our cavalry were retiring before the enemy. Looking through the trees he could see a column on each side of the road moving in rapid retreat, and could hear the firing of the enemy as they followed on behind. Col. Colquitt then ordered Col. Evans to form his regiment in line of battle on the left of the road. Ordering up the section of Gamble's Battery he instructed it to take a position at the crossing and directed Col. Neal

commanding 19th Georgia to form immediately on the right of the guns. The 6th and 28th Georgia Regiments were formed on the left of the 64th, and a staff officer was dispatched to the cavalry directing it to form on the flanks. Accordingly, Col. Smith moved to the right flank with his regiment and Col. Clinch to the left with his.³⁰

Confederate General Samuel Jones, in his account of the battle, points out that the regimental commander of the 64th Georgia, a new regiment that had never been in action before, supposing that only mounted forces were advancing against him, had formed a square to resist cavalry.³¹ Colonel Colquitt arrived just in time to save the square from being ripped open by Union artillery. "Colquitt threw forward skirmishers and quickly formed line of battle under a brisk fire."³² In his report of the battle, General Finegan stated that the movement of Colonel Colquitt forward with his brigade "was predicated on the information that the enemy had only three regiments of infantry, with some cavalry and artillery."³³ This statement indicates the lack of knowledge the Confederate commander had about the size and armaments of the force he was facing.

Captain Winston Stephens, 2nd Florida Cavalry, described his participation in this early phase of the battle:

We met the enemy some six miles from our entrenchments and I was thrown to the front with my company to skirmish with them. I engaged them and continued to fall back firing as I went until we got near our infantry support which was one mile from the entrenchmentsWhen we got to the infantry line I was thrown to the right flank sometimes Col. McCormick commanding and sometimes I was in command and Col. Clinch occupied the left flank.³⁴

Lieutenant Drury Rambo, Company A of the Milton Light Artillery, was ordered at 1 P.M. to move his thirty-pounder Parrott gun which had been mounted on a railroad flatcar down the railroad until he should receive orders. He immediately ordered the gun detachment of thirteen privates and a gunner aboard, and, a locomotive having been furnished, proceeded down the railroad line. As directed, he reported his presence to Colonel Colquitt.³⁵

Meanwhile, Colonel Colquitt had been instructed to take command of the forces which had preceded him to include the cavalry, 64th Georgia and the two companies of the 32nd Georgia. Colonel Harrison with the remainder of the 2nd brigade of the Confederate forces minus the 1st Florida battalion and the 6th Georgia (Colquitt's brigade) was ordered forward from the entrenchments about 1:30 P.M. that afternoon for the purpose of supporting Colonel Colquitt. With these troop movements, it is obvious that General Finegan had changed his original plans to have the Union forces drawn onto the defensive works being prepared at Olustee; he had instead decided to move forward to make contact with the enemy. With a limited knowledge of the disposition of the Union forces or the exact nature of the ground where the contact would take place, this was a rather risky course of action.

The area in which the battle was about to take place was firm, level, even ground covered by pine and relatively

free from undergrowth. Its shape was roughly circular with a diameter north of the railroad of about two-thirds of a mile from north to south (see Figures 9-1, 9-2.)³⁶ To the north and west, it was bordered by a continuous dense swampy bay. To the east and south were small isolated bays. In the northern sector there was an old cleared field where the fighting later would be very severe. Except for the pond and swampy areas, the ground was readily passable. Cover was afforded individuals by the scattered pine trees, but little was available for groups. Concealment was also limited although forces could be maneuvered without detection at a distance.

The railroad crossed the southeastern sector of the battlefield in a general northeast to southeasterly direction, curving towards due west as it approached the western extremity of the area. The road from Sanderson to Olustee entered the area north of the railroad, crossed the field diagonally to the southwest, and then crossed the railroad to the south. The initial positions of the meeting forces were the 64th Georgia forming at the crossing of the railroad and road, and the advance elements of Henry's light brigade at the place where the road branches as it enters the tract from the east. In distance, the site of the battle was located about three miles east of Olustee and six miles west of Sanderson. When the head of the Union column reached the battle area at 2 P.M., the men had neither rested nor eaten

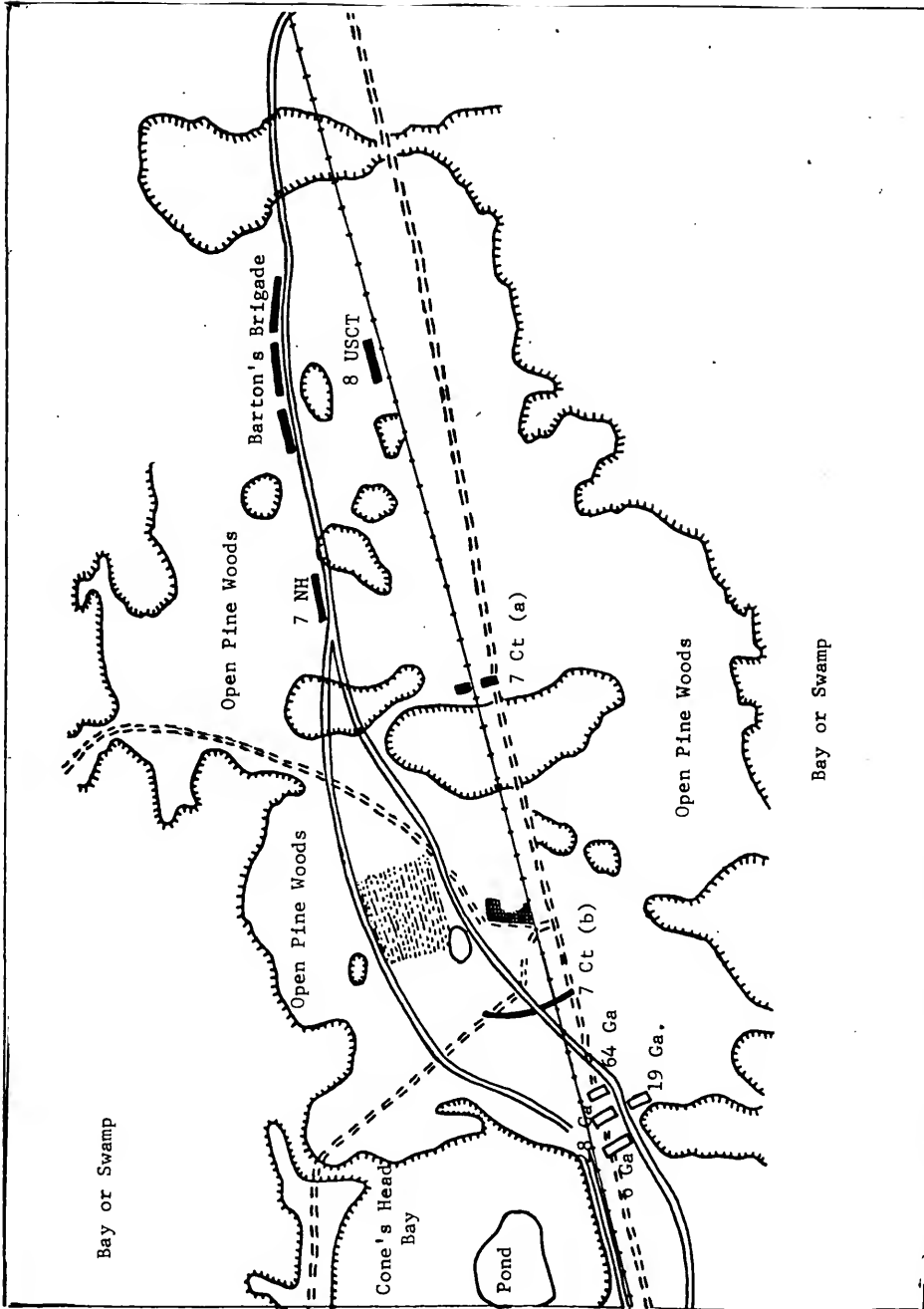


Figure 9-2. The First Stage of the Battle. Source: Boyd, "The Federal Campaign," (reprinted by permission of the Florida Historical Society).

since they had left Barber's some seven hours earlier and had covered sixteen tedious miles over a road that was at times loose sand, boggy turf, or covered knee deep in water.³⁷

At the junction of the Union forces belonging to Henry's and Hawley's brigades, General Seymour ordered the 7th Connecticut to send two companies forward as skirmishers. The first two companies, under Captain C. C. Mills and Lieutenant Jeremiah Townsend, moved up and deployed on the left of the railroad with the 2nd Company as a reserve for the left of the line. Another company of the 7th Connecticut moved forward to the right of the railroad and the remainder of the regiment followed within supporting distance. Writing to his wife, a member of the 7th Connecticut, described the first contact between the forces:

As soon as we were deployed [we] were ordered to advance, keep cool, take aim, and not waste our ammunition. Perhaps you will better understand if I explain what it is to deploy as skirmishers. The Company is formed into a single line, the men five paces apart, then the whole line, reaching about half a mile, moves forward, the reserve Company following the center of the line about 100 yards in the rear. As we advanced, the enemy retired, keeping just in sight. Whenever we could get near enough to stand any chance of doing execution we would blaze away at them and they returned the fire in a way that showed that they were good marksmen, for their shots came plenty near enough, although none of us were hit.³⁸

While the Confederate forces were deploying, the skirmishers from the 7th Connecticut advanced. Although the unit was much reduced in numbers, the seven-shot repeating Spencer rifles gave it a collective firepower superior to

units much larger in size. The action continued as described by Sergeant Clement of the Independent Battalion:

We went slowly, and the rebel cavalry again appeared vexatiously near, as though to invite us to charge after them. In less than ten minutes General Seymour ordered us to wheel to the left and halt, that he might send a shot up the road. To this shot there was no response, and the rebel cavalry had disappeared over a slight elevation of the road. A few rods further on we came to the edge of a clearing. Here Elder fired another shot and he got a prompt response that killed one of his horses.³⁹

Another view of the action was recorded by Walt Whittemore:

Our men continued to drive the rebels back, sometimes on the right and sometimes on the left of the railroad, but principally on the left. While this was going on, two companies of the Fortieth Massachusetts were ordered to the left, with a view of outflanking the enemy's skirmishers. In endeavoring to carry out that order, the Fortieth Massachusetts came upon a heavy line of skirmishers, and were compelled to withdraw to their original position.⁴⁰

After the enemy guns had responded to Elder's reconaissance by fire, the 7th Connecticut was ordered forward by General Seymour to try to secure the enemy's battery. The remainder of the regiment, 3rd and 4th companies, which had been in reserve, were brought up on the double upon the right of the railroad to join the line of skirmishers. Captain B. F. Skinner, commanding the 7th Connecticut, believed at this point the Confederates were making a flank movement to mass their advance on the Union right. What he probably saw was Colonel Colquitt extending his regiments on the left of the Confederate line.⁴¹ Captain Skinner's report picks up the action:

The line was pushed forward as rapidly as possible paying particular attention to the enemy's batteries, the strength of which had developed on the left of our line to the right of the railroad. After moving up 200 or 300 yards I found the enemy drawn up in a line to receive us and in a position to support their battery, the enemy here showing a front of five regiments, flanked on the right and left by cavalry, which made occasional demonstrations against our flanks, but were easily turned back in disorder.

After firing a few moments, I pushed forward thinking support was close. This caused the enemy to give ground, about 200 yards, in some confusion but firing as they went. Here I discovered the enemy was entrenched and delivered well-directed volleys of musketry.⁴²

At this point Captain Skinner found his ammunition was almost expended and that he had pushed so far into the enemy's center that his line had formed a semi-circle and he was taking fire from three sides. He decided to withdraw before being swallowed up, a movement executed rapidly.⁴³ The other elements of the 7th Connecticut did little better. Captain Mills with 1st company as skirmishers and 2nd company under Lieutenant Townsend in reserve, started to run into stiffening resistance and were soon almost entirely checked. At this location, Captain Mills's left flank was in a swamp and subjected to an intense fire from the Confederate right flank. Mills advanced his right flank a few rods to where the ground was more open and passable and ordered his men to lie down while maintaining a lively fire. In this position, his ammunition was almost exhausted and he too withdrew his unit under pressure from an advancing enemy.⁴⁴

Confederate Captain John Wheaton, battery commander of the Chatham Artillery, reported that he received orders at

noon to move one section of his battery to the front in company with the 6th Georgia and the 1st Georgia Regulars. They had advanced about two miles when an artillery round from the Union forces (Elder's reconnaissance by fire) passed over the heads of his battery and killed a private from the 32nd Georgia which was behind them. James M. Dancy, in his Reminiscences of the Civil War, wrote:

The Gen. [Harrison] and his staff were assembled nearly a mile from the enemy's front line. The enemy opened fire with a twelve-pound shell artillery, and almost at the first fire a shell exploded in their midst, and my brother, Robert F. Dancy, was struck in the left side by a piece of shell about the size of my fist, and was instantly killed, falling from his horse.⁴⁵

At this time a courier from Colonel Colquitt arrived at the Chatham Artillery with orders for Captain John Wheaton to move his battery out of the road and for him to report in person to the Colonel. Captain Wheaton did so and was directed to post his guns one hundred yards to the right of Gamble's battery. Wheaton noted that:

At this time there was some artillery and musketry firing from the enemy, but it had not become general. Our troops were resting upon the ground, the left of the line terminating near the rail road track. Gamble's Battery was in the rear of the infantry, its left about thirty feet from the dirt road which crossed the rail road diagonally some fifty yards in front. My orders were to occupy the position designated, and to open fire as soon as we came into battery (the enemy could then be seen about a thousand yards distant), and to advance or retire with the infantry, keeping my Battery dressed on Gamble's Battery.⁴⁶

Major George Gratten, Colquitts's adjutant, recorded his observation of the approach of the 7th Connecticut's skirmishers who:

now pushing forward saw our troops in the act of forming line of battle, and commenced a brisk fire upon us. Being armed with long range Spencer rifles, their fire was very effective, and threw some of our troops into considerable confusion. Lieut. Col. Barrow of the 64th Georgia was killed, and Col. Evans and Major _____ of the same regiment were both wounded. That regiment being thus without a field officer, and having never before been in action, became somewhat broken, but the coolness of the of the 28th Georgia restored these men to confidence, and many of them rallied and fought through the action. Capt. Gamble's men being raw troops were considerably excited by the suddenness with which they were thrown into the action.⁴⁷

Colonel Colquitt, finding that the enemy were in strength, sent a staff officer back to General Finegan to request reinforcements. The Union forces opened up with a battery of six guns and the rifle fire from both sides became brisk. The 6th Florida battalion under Major P. B. Bird came up at this time and deployed while under fire to the right of the 19th Georgia in what would become a key position.

The first stage of the battle saw the two forces coming together in what is termed a "meeting engagement" with neither side anticipating a battle of the scope that Olustee was to take. Neither side had preselected or made a detailed examination of the battlefield and both sides commenced feeding in units as they arrived on the scene, with little information about their opponent upon which to base plans or schemes of maneuver. Both commanders were at fault

in the matter of security; General Seymour in his advance through enemy-held country and General Finegan for his failures to maintain better contact with an enemy force of size in his proximity, and to select the location of the engagement. At this stage, it was anyone's victory as both sides were close to evenly matched and the ground offered neither side an advantage.

The Second Stage

The battle was initiated with no prior planning; the primary idea for the Union forces seemed to be to attack whatever was offering resistance in front of them. As this resistance solidified, General Seymour massed his artillery, placing Hamilton's and Langdon's batteries alongside Elder's battery which was in the center of the line and well forward in the Napoleonic style, supported by the infantry from Hawley's brigade on either side. In his report of the battle, he stated:

My intention was to engage the enemy in front with the artillery, supported by a regiment on either flank, while a brigade should be moved to the right so as to fall upon the elongation of his line.⁴⁸

The brigades coming up were to be used to attack the Confederate left after it had been softened up by the artillery. It was good Napoleonic, pre-conoidal bullet and rifled weapons tactics. The second stage of the battle, for the Union side, was characterized by the movements of the 7th New Hampshire and the 8th U. S. Colored Troops to take

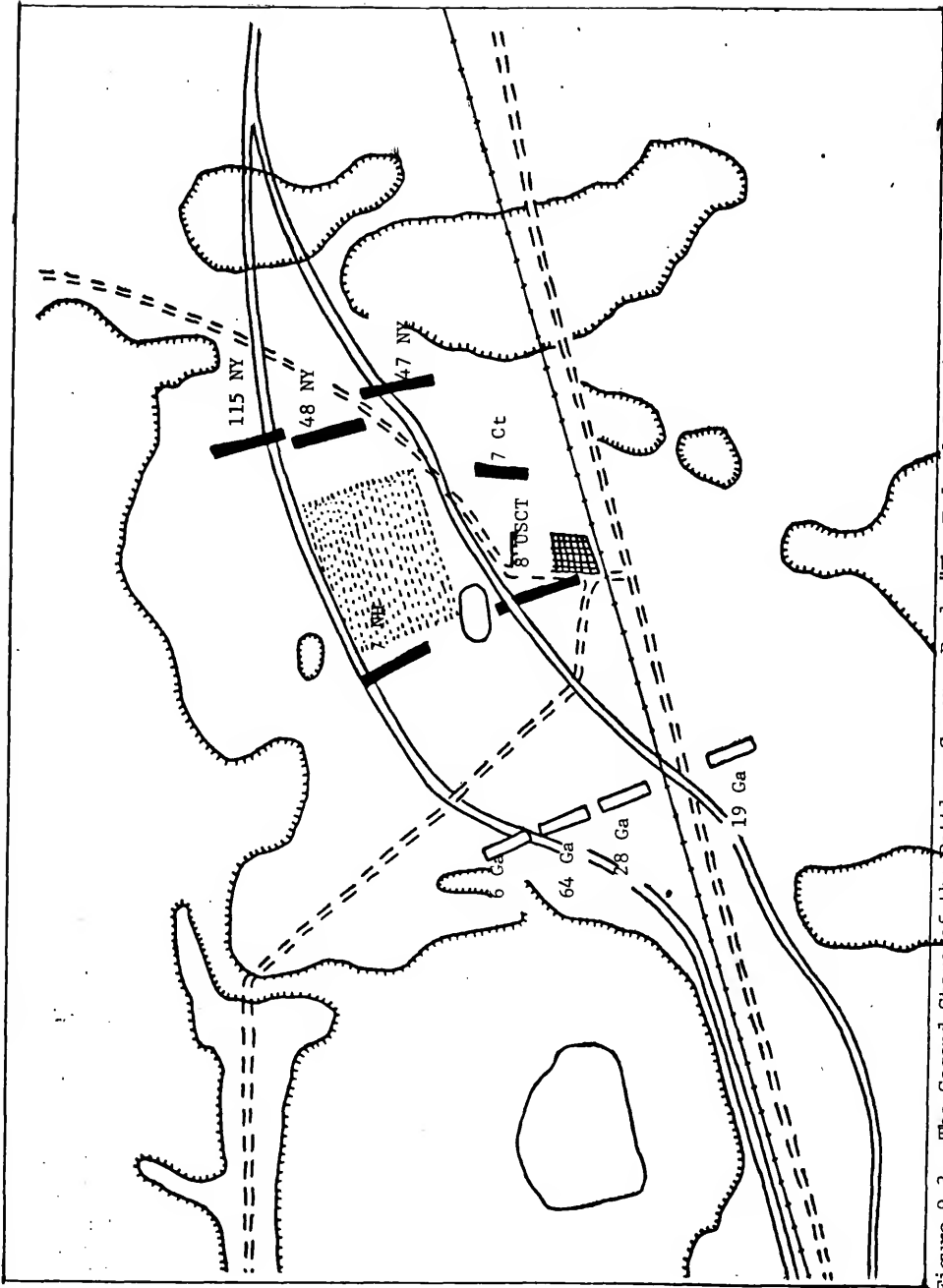


Figure 9-3. The Second Stage of the Battle. Source: Boyd, "The Federal Campaign," (reprinted by permission of the Florida Historical Society).

position on the right and left sides of the artillery, respectively, and forward of the artillery position. Elder's Horse battery was on the field initially, and when Hamilton's battery came up, it was deployed to the left of Elder's, with Langdon's battery later placed to the left of Hamilton's position, completing the massing of the Union artillery.

As the 7th Connecticut withdrew, dividing right and left to unmask the 7th New Hampshire, General Seymour advanced the remaining regiments of Hawley's brigade. Colonel Hawley had been only a few minutes behind Henry's command as it was following the enemy's skirmishers. Colonel Hawley had been advancing with the 8th U. S. Colored Troops and the 7th New Hampshire abreast. He directed the 8th U. S. Colored Troops, which had been advancing along the railroad on the left, to leave the railroad, change direction to the right, and come nearer the highway. Leaving the 8th to go in on the left of a pond or swamp which was near some Federal artillery, Colonel Hawley took the 7th New Hampshire and moved to the right sending for directions. He then met the skirmishers from the 7th Connecticut who were falling back, and, according to his report:

I distinctly ordered the Seventh New Hampshire to deploy on the eighth company, which would have brought the left of the line near the pond. Somebody must have misunderstood the order, for a portion of the regiment was going wrong, when myself and staff and Colonel Abbott repeated it vigorously, but vainly. All semblance of organization was lost in a few moments, save with about one company which faced the enemy and opened fire. The remainder constantly drifted back,

suffering from the fire which a few moments' decision would have checked, if not suppressed.⁵⁰

The confusion in deployment of the 7th New Hampshire was directly attributable to the conflicting orders given to it. Writing later in a Unit history, a member of the 7th New Hampshire recalled this critical moment:

An order was given by General Hawley, to "Deploy column on fifth company," which was the color company. Colonel Abbottt, repeating the order clearly and distinctly, ordered the battalion to face to the right and left, when General Hawley, finding himself wrong, said, "On your tenth company, sir!" All the companies, except the tenth, having already faced to the right and left, were marching to get into line as though deploying on the fifth company; and under the successive change of orders the companies who were trying to deploy into line became badly embarrassed, and being under a terrific fire from the artillery and infantry of the enemy, and the wrong orders having been given and obeyed upon the instant, and the manoeuver having been partially executed before the correct order reached them, the battalion had become so badly mixed that it could not be re-formed, although those broken masses of troops bravely stood their ground.

It was impossible under the then existing circumstances to deploy other than on the tenth company, as the artillery was immediately on our left, and the companies of the left wing could not have crowded into the space between the fifth company and the artillery; and on the eighth company the same obstacle would have presented itself. But the mistake of our commanding officers could not then be remedied; the ground was becoming thickly dotted with the bodies of the fallen, yet those brave men faced to the front and did what execution was possible under the circumstances, although the whole left wing was armed with those same old muskets which had been exchanged from some of the mounted troops attached to the command but a few days before, not, however, until the guns had been completely spoiled for effective use at a time like this.⁵¹

Sergeant Otis A. Merrill, writing home within the week after the battle, confirmed the issuance of incorrect orders by commanders. He believed that the fault lay with Colonel

Hawley as the brigade had marched for over a hundred yards under his direction before the order was given to form a line of battle.⁵² The sergeant reported that he stopped where the company stood when the men began to start falling back until "the bullets came faster from the rear than from the front."⁵³ He also confirmed that the Confederate artillery fire did little damage to the infantry line on the right as it was too high. The tenth company of the 7th New Hampshire was the only one that stood fast and formed on the line. It fell back only when the other companies had already fallen back, leaving it without any support.⁵⁴ The second point that Sergeant Merrill mentioned, being armed with defective weapons, contributed to the breaking of the 7th New Hampshire. Oscar Sawyer noted:

Dissatisfaction and want of confidence had been created in the regiment by depriving it of the Spencer repeating-rifle, and the issue, instead of Springfield muskets in bad condition; some lacking locks, others rusted or wanting screws, proper springs, or otherwise useless. Unable to protect themselves with these curious weapons, one wing of the regiment gave way and could not be rallied. The other wing, which had retained the "Spencer" arm, remained until they had expended their ammunition, and their officers could supply no more.⁵⁵

Colonel Abbott, commanding the 7th New Hampshire, in his report, described this critical point at which his regiment was given the conflicting orders:

The order was then once commanded, "Halt, front!" but the fire of the enemy had now become very severe, and in the attempt to bring the regiment again into column confusion ensued followed by faltering on the part of some of the men, and finally in almost a complete

break. About 100 of the regiment remained upon the ground occupied by the column and the remainder fell back a short distance, when with some other officers I succeeded in rallying a part of them, bring them into something like order, and again advancing.⁵⁶

Colonel Abbot claims that during the engagement, the small group of men that were with him continued to hold a position just to the right of where the initial deployment had taken place. He also stated that he received no further orders from Colonel Hawley, the brigade commander, until the close of the battle.⁵⁷

Sergeant Merrill recalled a remarkable display of courage and fortitude that took place during the confusion by one of the 7th New Hampshire by the name of Herman Maynard, better known as "Shaker" of Company C:

"Shaker's" arm was broken and badly shattered, and he sat behind a tree and shouted to the men to "Rally around the flag!" One of the men, whose finger had been shot away, was mourning over his misfortune in the hearing of "Shaker", who laughed at him and told him to look at his (Shaker's) arm. The next morning I went to the hospital at Barbour's Plantation to see some of the men, and there found "Shaker" with his arm in a sling, while with the well arm he was assisting to care for others, and cheerfully said, "Glad it was no worse."⁵⁸

A truism taught all novice military leaders is, "Order, counter-order, disorder." In the opening stages of the battle of Olustee, the Union forces were deprived of the effective services of a proven, veteran regiment. While later criticism would tarnish, un-deservedly, the reputation of the 7th New Hampshire, the blame more properly would lie with the general who ordered half of the unit to exchange

their Spencer repeaters for largely un-serviceable weapons, and their regimental and brigade commanders for issuing conflicting orders at a critical time. Had that unit been properly deployed and able to use their fire power, there might have been a different conclusion to the battle.

Most of the officers of the 7th New Hampshire went back with their men trying to rally them. An example of heroism was demonstrated by color-bearer Sergeant Thomas H. Simington of Company B who "obeyed every word or signal, and sometimes faced the enemy alone."⁵⁹ One of Colonel Hawley's staff officers, Lieutenant Van Keuren, with the aid of a cavalry officer and his company were able to stop some of the retreating soldiers; Colonel Abbott was able to stop others with cavalry help. In all, some 200 men were thus gathered on the right of the field where they remained firing until ordered to retreat.⁶⁰

The artillery that Colonel Hawley had noticed when the 8th U. S. Colored Troops was going forward to the left of a pond was Hamilton's battery of the 3rd U. S. Artillery. Upon the general engagement of the pickets, Colonel Henry had gone forward to reconnoiter the Confederate position. Returning, he informed Captain Hamilton, in General Seymour's presence, that by positioning two sections of artillery at a spot he would designate, it would be possible to enfilade the enemy's line.⁶¹ The two sections were then advanced, but upon coming into battery, were subjected to an brisk fire from a more

extended line of infantry than had been first observed. In Captain Hamilton's words:

My battery was under 250 yards from the enemy's right of infantry, while an oblique line of cavalry bore off to their right and nearly as far as I could see, into the woods. The Eighth U. S. Colored, Colonel Fribbley, then deployed, but its left wing filled all the intervals of my pieces and prevented their working to any advantage. As soon as I saw this position I felt that all hopes of withdrawing my guns to a more favorable position were gone, for the reason that the Eighth U.S. Colored were green troops, and should I have limbered to the rear I was sure they would run before the second line could come up to our support.⁶²

Captain Hamilton's battery took intense fire from the Confederate right which wounded many of his gunners and himself. Captain Langdon's battery took position on his left, but at this time, Captain Hamilton directed Lieutenant John R. Myrick to "get off the pieces" and reported to General Seymour who sent him off the battlefield.⁶³ Captain Hamilton recalled that his own men did well but the group of men attached to his battery from the Enfans Perdus behaved badly under fire.⁶⁴ The Enfans Perdus (Lost Children) were men from "Independent" battalions who had been a source of trouble in the Department of the South. For this expedition, they had been divided up among several of the veteran units to fill the ranks left vacant by the men home on leave. During this battle they would also prove to be a problem to the other units to which they were assigned.

Lieutenant Eddy of Hamilton's battery, writing two days after the battle from the hospital steamer Cosmopolitan in Port Royal harbor, said:

Hamilton's battery was ordered forward. Four pieces of the battery, including my section, were placed in position within a hundred and fifty yards of the rebel lines, under a severe fire of musketry. We went in with four pieces, fifty horses, eighty-two men, and four officers, namely Captain Hamilton, Lieutenant Myrick, Lieutenant Dodge, and myself. In twenty minutes we lost forty-five men, forty horses, two guns, and four officers, when we managed to get off with what little was left.⁶⁵

The 8th U. S. Colored Troops had little in the way of advance warning of the impending battle. In a letter written to his sister, Lieutenant Oliver Wilcox Norton recalls marching some twelve miles that morning and reaching Sanderson where the 8th was halted. A few shots were heard but the assumption was that the Union cavalry had met some pickets. Very little was made of the firing because the enemy forces was supposed to be at Lake City, still some twelve miles distant.⁶⁶ After resuming the march, he was startled by the firing of artillery but supposed it was Elder's Horse battery which was with the advance guard. With an increase of firing, it began to be realized that a "brush" might be about to take place. After leaving the railroad along which the unit had been advancing and when within about 1,000 yards of the enemy an aide came dashing through the woods to the Unit and the order to "double quick march" was given. The 8th U. S. Colored Troops turned into the woods and ran in the direction of the firing for about half a mile until they reached the batteries north of the railroad and on the left of the Union line. General Seymour directed Colonel

Charles W. Fribley to "put your regiment in" and left.

Lieutenant Norton described the situation:

Military men say it takes veteran troops to maneuver under fire, but our regiment with knapsacks on and unloaded pieces, after a run of half a mile, formed a line under the most destructive fire I ever knew. We were not more than two hundred yards from the enemy, concealed in pits and behind trees, and what did our regiment do? At first they were stunned, bewildered, and knew not what to do. They curled to the ground, and as men fell around them they seemed terribly scared, but gradually they recovered their senses and commenced firing. And here was the great trouble--they could not use their arms to advantage. We have had very little practice in firing, and though they could stand and be killed, they could not kill a concealed enemy fast enough to satisfy my feelings.⁶⁷

In a second letter, this one to his father written a few days later, he elaborated:

We were double-quickened for half a mile, came under fire from the flank, formed line with empty pieces under fire, and before the men had loaded, many of them were shot down. . . .

Our regiment has been drilled too much for dress parade and too little for the field. They can march well, but they cannot shoot rapidly or with effect. Some of them can but the greater part cannot. Colonel Fribley had applied time and time again for permission to practice his regiment in target firing, and been always refused.⁶⁸

The commander of the brigade to which the 8th was attached, Colonel Hawley, later wrote:

In the meantime Colonel Fribley's black men met the enemy at short range. They had reported to be only two or three days before; I was afterward told they had never had a day's practice in loading and firing. Old troops finding themselves so greatly overmatched, would have run a little and re-formed--with or without orders. The black men stood to be killed or wounded--losing more than 300 out of 550.⁶⁹

The regimental surgeon of the 8th U. S. Colored Troops recorded his impression of the situation the unit was ordered into:

A place which was sufficiently hot to make veterans tremble, and yet we were to enter it with men who had never heard the sound of a cannon. Colonel Fribley ordered the regiment, by company, into line, double-quick march; but before it was fairly in line, the men commenced dropping like leaves in autumn. Still, on they went, without faltering or murmuring, until they came within two hundred yards of the enemy, when the struggle for life and death commenced. Here they stood for two hours and a half, under one of the most terrible fires I ever witnessed; and here, on the field of Olustee, was decided whether the colored man had the courage to stand without shelter, and risk the dangers of the battlefield; and when I tell you that they stood with a fire in front, on their flank, and in their rear, for two hours and a half, without flinching, and when I tell you the number of dead and wounded, I have no doubt as to the verdict of every man who has gratitude for the defenders of his country, white or black.⁷⁰

The final report of the battle for the 8th U. S. Colored troops was made by Captain R. C. Bailey who found himself in command as the regiment's more senior officers were killed or disabled. He recalled:

We were soon under fire of the enemy at short range, we apparently being opposed by the entire left wing of the enemy, who very soon poured in a deadly fire on our left flank, which was unprotected wholly. Colonel Fribley now ordered the regiment to fall back slowly, which we did, firing as we retired, being unable to withstand so disastrous a fire. The order had just reached me on the extreme right when the Colonel fell mortally wounded. The command now devolved on Major Burritt, who soon received two wounds and retired from the field, the regiment at this time engaging the enemy with steadiness, and holding the ground for some time near Hamilton's battery which we were trying to save.⁷¹

The correspondent from the New York Times in writing of the 8th's baptism of fire noted that:

A part of this regiment came into action with empty guns, and being under a terrible fire, and cramped for room, it was found impossible to form a line of battle to the best advantage. Considering that this was the first time the regiment had been under fire, it behaved remarkable well. The reports that it got into confusion and ran from the field are certainly false. I cannot account for its good conduct, considering that the men are raw recruits, only on the ground they were under superior officers.⁷²

Whittemore, noting the congestion and the limited maneuver area, recorded the comment, "To retreat at that time was impossible, for the road was filled with troops coming up, and the wood on either side would not admit of passage on the flank."⁷³

When the fire became general, Surgeon Adolph Majer, On General Seymour's staff, began looking for a convenient ambulance depot. First riding to the right towards a couple of log houses, which were the only ones within miles, he found them too exposed. He continued:

About 200 yards in the rear of our left, observing a cluster of pine trees, I directed our ambulances (twelve in number) to be drawn up in line, the surgeons preparing their instruments and appliances to be in readiness. While the roar of the artillery and musketry fire continued without intermission, our wounded men began to arrive, part walking, some on litters, and others in open ambulance wagons, as it were, first in single drops, then trickling, after a while steady stream, increasing from a single row to a double and treble, and finally into a mass. In a half hour from the commencement, stray shots passing through the tall pines, and breaking them off at the trunk like canes, admonished us to move the depot farther to the rear, when within 1 mile we drew our ambulances up behind a small stream and guarded in front by miry ground, thus securing a sufficiency of

water, yet not of suitable protection against missiles from rifled guns.⁷⁴

For the Confederate forces, the second stage of the battle involved less movement in the critical areas. The positions of the 28th and 19th Georgia on the right of the line, with the 19th Georgia overlapping the Union left flank enabled these units to pour a devastating fire in on the Union left as it was deploying. The 2nd Florida Cavalry, on the right flank and occasionally fighting dismounted, added something; how much it added would be the subject of an inquiry after the battle. The 64th Georgia and the two companies of the 32nd Georgia that had initially occupied the position at the crossing of the road and the railroad track were shifted to the left of the 28th Georgia and to the north of the railroad. The 6th Georgia was sent still further to the left to avoid what appeared to be a flanking movement being made by the Union troops. It was more probably the deployment of the 7th New Hampshire. Upon the completion of these troop deployments, Colonel Colquitt ordered the Confederate line to advance. As he developed the strength of the Union line, he sent back to General Finegan for reinforcements.

When this stage of the battle ended, the two advanced Union regiments, the 7th New Hampshire and the 8th U. S. Colored Troops were shattered, taking heavy casualties from a sustained musketry fire from four Confederate regiments plus two companies of the 32nd, on line, and supported by a

section of artillery. The right of the Confederate line overlapped the left of the Union line where a green regiment was subjected to fire from two regiments supported by cavalry occasionally fighting dismounted. The Union artillery found itself in an exposed, too forward position as its infantry support dissolved, and the artillerymen and their horses were being rapidly decimated by small arms fire.

The Third Stage

Colonel Barton's brigade with Langdon's battery attached had been second in the column of brigades that composed the main body of the Union forces departing Barber's. The initial formation of the brigade was column of regiments with Captain Langdon's Battery, Battery M, 1st U.S. Artillery at about the middle of the brigade. The battery consisted of four light twelve-pounder brass guns and, with the two guns of the section of Captain James' 3rd Rhode Island Volunteer Artillery under Lieutenant Metcalf, gave the brigade a total of six guns in all. As the brigade approached Olustee, firing could be heard that was increasing in intensity. Colonel Barton halted for a short while and deployed one regiment on the right and two on the left. When they again continued, the brigade moved forward in three columns, the regiments by the flank, and the battery in a column of pieces. An hour went by during which the brigade

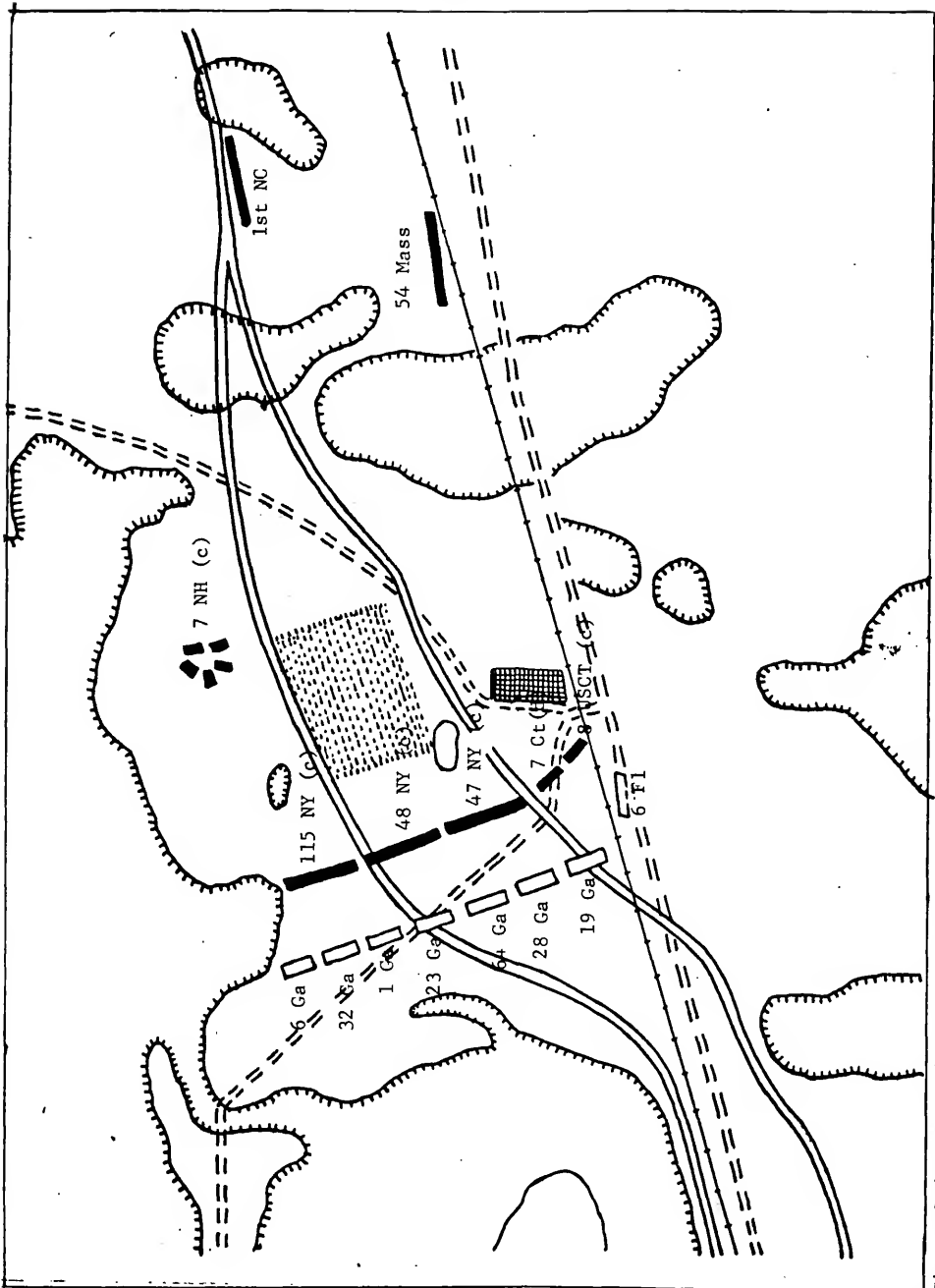


Figure 9-4. The Third Stage of the Battle. Source: Boyd, "The Federal Campaign," (reprinted by permission of the Florida Historical Society).

halted a number of times without covering much distance, the sound of the firing occurring with fewer intervals between the shots until it became almost a continuous sound of musketry.⁷⁶ At this point an aide came galloping up to Captain Langdon who brought orders to "come at once." He was followed shortly by a second aide with another order to "come up as quickly as possible."⁷⁷ Captain Langdon moved up to where Captain Hamilton was standing with General Seymour. After a short while, he was sent over to the left where help was needed and while moving to that location, was overtaken by an aide who told him to send one section over to the right. While on the move, Captain Langdon detached Lieutenant Tully McCrea's section of two guns, and continued on with the four guns he had left.

Captain Langdon took position about 100 to 150 yards to the left rear of Elder's battery which appeared to be on the extreme left of the line. Not being able to see the enemy, he fired a few rounds at a line of smoke in front of him but, dissatisfied with lack of results, limbered up and moved further to the left. He started to receive intensive rifle fire at this new position. One of his caissons at this time passed in front of his guns, masking their fire, and preventing them from firing at the Confederate line. The drivers of the caisson, under fire from the nearby Confederate line, took off and left the caisson and horses entangled in some trees. Lieutenant Henry Metcalf's section

of two guns suddenly limbered up and left for the rear (under orders Captain Langdon later found out from Captain Elder who thought they were in a dangerous position). Captain Langdon decided to move his remaining two guns at this time because his position was becoming untenable. One of his limbers got caught in a tree and, seeing a sudden advance of the Confederate line, Captain Langdon directed the fire of his two guns to the right and obliquely across the front of the Union troops. The battle intensified and Captain Langdon found himself down to seven men. He requested more men from General Seymour, who was standing nearby, but was told none were available. The Union line now started to fall back, and Captain Langdon noticed Lieutenant McCrea being carried off wounded after losing one of his guns. In respect to the infantry that was supposed to be protecting his position, Captain Langdon recalls:

As regards my support there was no appearance of an organization of our people on my left or immediate front. I saw a number of men of colored regiments in groups of from 2 up to 10, very much excited and huddling behind my caissons, and some of them firing through and over the battery. I saw 2 officers with them, but only for an instant. One of them tried to wave them on with his sword; 5 or 6 followed him about ten steps and then all retreated. The color bearer, a large, powerful man, with a blue regimental flag, remained on the left of my guns, where Metcalf had been, and near my piece; he stood there manfully and bravely to the last, and with but 2 or 3 companions, sometimes entirely alone; what became of him I am unable to say. I saw many wounded colored soldiers appearing suddenly in front and on my left without muskets, and it appeared as if they had been lying down and taken the first opportunity to get to the rear. Some of the infantry, while facing the enemy and firing wildly, did not show fear, nor did I see any of them

absolutely run off, but groups of them huddled together and did nothing, and many of them were in this position shot, while they seemed unconscious that they were hit. I desired them to take to the trees with a hope that I would thus in a measure draw off the fire of the enemy. It is my impression that this portion of the regiment had been broken, and retreated from the front, before I came up, and the appearance of my caissons reassured them and brought them up again to the flag.⁷⁸

Captain John Keely of the 19th Georgia recalled the Confederate charge:

We had a good start, and were hard to stop, when--a battery was wheeled into position by the enemy, and opened on us with grape and cannister shot, doing much damage. We were now halted, dressed and ordered to charge this battery, which we did, killing the horses, defeating its infantry supports, and capturing the guns. While doing this five of my company were killed and wounded while successively they grasped the flag as it fell from its previous bearer.⁷⁹

Captain Langdon reported that he lost eleven men killed on the field and twenty-three wounded; he also lost twenty-eight horse killed (principally at the guns), eleven horses wounded, three of his four guns, two caissons, and two limbers.⁸⁰ Captain Hamilton, the senior artillery officer present, who should have been advising General Seymour as to the disposition of the artillery, said afterwards:

I had to act on the line of infantry as a general staff officer. This is to be the more regretted, for could I have had the directing of Langdon's battery it would not have taken the position it did. I had not even time to communicate with the general. But personally I have nothing to regret. By the sacrifice of five pieces of artillery I saved our whole left flank from breaking and its disastrous consequences. We thus changed a rout into a simple defeat or beating back.⁸¹

As the 6th Florida battalion and the 23rd Georgia arrived on the field and Colonel Colquitt quickly fed them

into the Confederate line of battle. The 23rd Georgia was placed on the left of the 64th Georgia; the 6th Florida battalion, assigned to the right flank, further overlapped the Union left, adding to the Confederate fire power directed at that part of the Union line. One section of Captain Wheaton's Chatham Artillery had initially been to the right of Gamble's battery on the extreme right of the Confederate line. When the firing had become general, the Chatham Artillery, following orders, fired and prepared to follow the infantry as it advanced. A problem had developed with the Confederate artillery, however, as described by Captain Wheaton:

After firing five or six rounds from each piece, finding that the infantry had advanced and was still advancing, I thought it time to move my section further to the front. Looking to the left to see where Gamble's Battery was, I discovered that it was in great confusion. The horses had become unmanageable, and some of them were running down the road to the rear at the top of their speed, with the limbers and without drivers. That battery had ceased firing. At that moment I was ordered to occupy a position directly in front of where Gamble's Battery had been posted, and to keep my Battery as near the centre of the infantry line as practicable, moving to the front as the infantry advanced.⁸²

Captain Robert H. Gamble's Battery, the Leon Light Artillery, had fired as long as they could despite the difficulties. The trail of his twelve-pounder howitzer was crushed during the action by the recoil of the gun but the crew continued firing until the broken end of the trail was so deeply imbedded into the earth as to make it unserviceable.⁸²

Lieutenant Rambo, Milton Light Artillery,

was still standing by with his thirty-pounder Parrott gun mounted on the railroad flatcar awaiting orders from Colonel Colquitt. From his position, he judged that:

It would be injudicious to open fire with my piece, for the thick forest of pines that intervened, and, in fact, in which our infantry was, the cutting down of limbs and trees, I believed that as much injury would result to us as good. About two hours after, when the enemy were given way, I received orders to throw a few shells as nearly among them as possible. Three rounds were fired with unknown effect.⁸⁴

In the process of firing, his gun became damaged when five spokes of the right wheel broke from the recoil.⁸⁵ After the battle, surprisingly, a number of reports mentioned the railroad gun, greatly exaggerating its actual participation.

Colonel G. P. Harrison was already moving up to the front with the 2nd Brigade from the entrenchments at Olustee when he received Colonel Colquitt's message requesting that he move up quickly. He brought with him the remainder of the 32nd Georgia, the 1st Georgia Regulars, Bonaud's battalion, and one section of Guerard's light battery of his brigade, along with the 6th Georgia of Colquitt's brigade, arriving soon at the place at which the road crossed the railroad tracks. Colonel Harrison was given command of the left of the Confederate line and assigned a position on the left between the 23rd and 6th Georgia regiments, the 6th Georgia being moved to the extreme left. The Chatham Artillery was ordered to the center of the line and the section of Guerard's battery moved to the extreme right flank with orders not to fire unless the enemy advanced.⁸⁶ Shortly

after having taken position, Colonel Harrison was informed by Colonel Colquitt that he was in the correct position. The Confederate forces now started to advance.

Colonel William B. Barton brought his brigade onto the field en echelon in three parallel lines with the 47th New York on the left, the 48th New York in the center, and the 115th New York on the extreme right flank.⁸⁷ The 48th was split, a part of the regiment to the right of Hamilton's battery and another part of the regiment to the left.⁸⁸ The brigade occupied the ground recently vacated by the 7th New Hampshire in its retreat, and was soon subjected to the same concentrated fire. A member of the 115th New York who was present wrote:

We instantly swept forward in a beautiful line in the face of a galling fire, through reeds higher than our heads, and over logs and fences, until the hateful columns of southern grey were plainly visible. We halted and began to fire, and they greeted our appearance with a deadly volley of musketry.

It was now a continuous roar on both sides, and for three long hours the swift tide of battle surged with cruel fury. There was no lull in the rattle of musketry no calm and serene moment of security. The leaden messengers of death hailed down in increasing torrents. Grape and cannister swept by with hideous music, and shell after shell tore through our ranks and burst amid heaps of our wounded heroes.⁸⁹

The 115th New York would lose seven officers and 289 men, killed, wounded, and missing.

The N. Y. Herald's Oscar Sawyer wrote:

Meanwhile, on the right and centre, persistent efforts were made to crush in our lines. A rapid and furious cannonade and concentric fire was poured in. The cannon-shots generally crashed among the trees, and brought down among the wounded in the rear,

branches of the pines to inflict gratuitous injuries upon the helpless men and their attendant surgeons. Three times successively did Dr. Adolph Majes [sic], Chief Medical Officer with the army of Florida, order the removal of the field hospitals still further to the rear. The enemy's sharp-shooters on the opposite side of the railroad, in the tree-tops, or the long grass, poured in bullets upon the bleeding fugitives; and succeeded in making it necessary to remove the wounded eight miles away to Sanderson.

The stream of disabled men naturally took the railroad track as the easiest path from the battlefield. Unseen enemies pursued them. The spiteful bullets whistled near them. Many were thus killed. . . .⁹⁰

A wounded member of the 115th New York, on the extreme right flank, recalled his movement to the rear upon being wounded:

In a short time I came across a surgeon with about twenty wounded lying around him, and saw that he was engaged in the bloody works of amputation.

Just then a cruel shell burst in their midst, and sent the mangled remains of several of them flying in all directions.

I turned away from the sickening sight with horror.

I next approached the quarter of our own surgeon, and found him surrounded by fifty wounded, his arms crimsoned with blood, and himself engaged in cutting out balls. With the stream of wounded men from different regiments, I hurried on towards Sanderson.⁹¹

The New York brigade's commander, Colonel Barton, noted, "The fire during a great portion of the time we were engaged was both direct on our front and oblique on our flanks."⁹² The fire being received was both artillery and musketry, "rapid, accurate, and well sustained."⁹³ Colonel Barton believed that he was outnumbered and recalled that the enemy was taking good advantage of cover.⁹⁴ In the time the brigade was committed, Colonel Barton lost a total of 811

men, killed, wounded, and missing. Both the writer from the 115th New York and one from the 48th New York noticed the same thing; the Union artillery was placed too far forward (one said Hamilton's battery was within 150 yards of the Confederate position) and the rebel sharpshooters were able to pick off the artillerymen with fatal precision.⁹⁵

Colonel Hawley stated that after he tried in vain to help rally the 7th New Hampshire, he moved to the rear and found there the officers and men of the 7th Connecticut along with the unit's colors and buglers.⁹⁶ Upon the New York brigade being committed, Colonel Hawley moved the 7th Connecticut a little to the left and rear of that brigade's left and sent for the reserve ammunition as his little force's supply was almost exhausted. When resupplied, the 7th Connecticut moved forward to fill a gap that opened as the regiments on either side of them moved forward. The Confederate lines appeared some 600 yards distant and a little to the left. The 7th Connecticut took them under fire with the sights of their Spencer rifles set at 600 yards which appeared to check the enemy advance. The 7th Connecticut then remained in this position.⁹⁷

When the 8th U. S. Colored Troops, on the Union left, was subjected to the devastating fire from the Confederate right, Colonel Charles W. Fribley, the regimental commander, and the other officers had attempted to rally the men and get the regiment to retreat slowly but orderly. With the death or

wounding of the more senior officers of the regiment, Captain Romanzo C. Bailey, who had been commanding the right-most company in the formation took command. He had been with his company until he noticed that the color company had been nearly annihilated. He then took the few men he had left (about twenty) and went to the assistance of the color company which had lost thirty of its forty-three men. At this point he was informed that he was the senior man left in the regiment. Observing "that a regiment at least of the enemy was moving down the railroad to again attack our left, and knowing that our ammunition was exhausted, I took the responsibility to withdraw the regiment from the field, moving by the right flank, slowly and in good order, passing to the rear of the 54th Regiment Colored Troops (Massachusetts), where we remained until the retreat commenced."⁹⁸ (The 54th Massachusetts was just coming on to the field at this point) In the process of retreating, the 8th U. S. Colored Troops lost its national colors.

Lieutenant Elijah Lewis of the 8th noted that in the retrograde movement, the 8th did not move directly to the rear, but obliquely to the right, passing near where the colors were. Noticing a flag on the ground, he picked it up and discovered it was the national colors. At that time, one of the artillery battery officers rode up to him and said, "Don't leave the battery; bring your flag and rally the men around it."⁹⁹ Lieutenant Lewis carried the colors up to the

gun where he was told by Lieutenant Oliver Norton, also of the 8th, to give the flag to one of the men, and help form some sort of line. Lieutenant Andrew F. Ely also came up to help collect the men of the 8th. One man observed that "the guns had been jammed up so indiscriminately, and so close to the enemy's lines, that the gunners were shot down as fast as they made their appearance."¹⁰⁰ Suddenly, the horses attached to the limber of one of the guns bolted and ran through the group of the 8th that the Lieutenants were trying to rally. Lieutenant Lewis gave the colors to one of the men and grabbed the bridle of the near leader, and, with the help of some of his men, stopped the horses. This diversion apparently ended the efforts to rally the men and what was left of the unit continued to fall back. It was not until sometime later that it was realized that the colors had been left to be captured along with Hamilton's guns. The colors had already cost the lives of three of the 8th's color bearers. Sergeant Taylor of Company D, who carried the regiment's battle flag, had his right hand nearly shot off, but hung on to the colors with his left and brought it out with him.¹⁰¹

Surgeon A. P. Aeichhold, of the 8th U. S. Colored Troops found his hands full:

I took my position along the railroad, and had the wounded brought there, and while busily engaged a volley was poured into us. About a dozen of cavalry were preparing to make a charge on us, but disappeared as the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts advanced out of the woods. They knew the men were

wounded, and that it was an hospital, but disregarded it; and had it not been for the Fifty-fourth, which advanced in splendid order, they would undoubtedly have taken us all prisoners. . . . I saw at an early stage of the fight that we would be whipped, and went around among our wounded and told them, as many as could get away, to start for Barber, and then started the ambulance crowded full. . . . We were compelled to leave a few of our men behind, and they fell into the hands of the enemy. It could not be helped; I had but one ambulance to a regiment, and the railroad was useless because we have no locomotive. . . .¹⁰²

The third stage of the battle saw the arrival of the remainder of the Confederate troops from the entrenchments who were then fed into the Confederate line. One unit, the 6th Florida battalion, was placed on the right flank which proved to be a key position because its fire reinforced that of the 19th and 28th Georgia regiments on the Union left, contributing to the crumbling of that portion of the line. The other units were placed on the Confederate left where it appeared a flanking movement was taking place by the Union forces. In actuality, it was the abortive deployment of the 7th New Hampshire followed by its withdrawal and subsequent replacement by Colonel Barton's New York brigade. The Confederate troops on this flank also overlapped the Union flank with the result that a concentric fire was being concentrated on the Union position. As a number of correspondents have noted, the Confederate artillery was not effective but the musketry fire was producing heavy casualties. At the conclusion of this stage of the battle, both forces were facing each other in an extended line and the battle had become general. The Confederate forces were

attempting to move forward, while the Union forces were resisting stubbornly.

The Fourth Stage

Confederate Major George G. Gratten, Colonel Colquitt's adjutant-general, recalled that after the Confederate line had been formed with all of the regiments on line, the commanders of the cavalry were ordered to press upon the Union flanks while the infantry charged them in front. He noted, "Col. Smith dismounted his men and moved them out as skirmishers, but being badly armed and poorly drilled, they failed to attack with effect."¹⁰³ Colonel Caraway claimed that on two occasions he discovered the enemy attempting to cross the railroad on the right of the Confederate line and directed Lieutenant Colonel McCormick to dismount his troops and drive them back, which was done.¹⁰⁴ Captain Winston Stephens, 2nd Florida cavalry, felt exhilarated by the action:

The enemy pressed us quite hard but our artillery and infantry opened up and the boys yelled and went to work as men can only work who are in earnest. Then the scene was grand and exciting . . . I felt like I could wade through my weight in wildcats. The 2d Cav. was dismounted to fight on foot and I think we did good work. We went in with a wild yell and the Yanks and negroes give way, then we would remount and follow up and we continued to do that until the fight ended.¹⁰⁵

Major G. W. Scott's 5th Florida cavalry battalion was not brought on to the field until late in the afternoon because the men and horses were worn out from hard riding

during the previous twenty-four hours. When they arrived, they joined Lieutenant Colonel McCormick on the right. Colonel Duncan L. Clinch attempted a movement on horse but got bogged down in a marsh and did not really accomplish very much. The colonel was wounded in the leg early in the action and Captain Brown took over command of the 4th Georgia cavalry.¹⁰⁷

At this time General Finegan sent another written order to Colonel Colquitt assigning him to the command of all troops present at the front; he also sent forward all the troops that remained in the entrenchments at Olustee except for two guns of Gamble's battery and a small battalion. General Finegan advised Colonel Colquitt that if hard pressed, he was to fall back to Olustee station. Major Gratten observed that Colonel Colquitt was well aware of the dangers that such a retrograde movement would entail under the existing situation and "reposing every confidence in his troops who were fighting with a steadiness never excelled - ordered a general charge."¹⁰⁸

At the center of the Confederate position, after bringing his unit into battery, Captain Wheaton of the Chatham Artillery found his section of two guns were the only Confederate artillery then in action against the Union's sixteen guns. He sent back to Colonel Colquitt to request another section be sent up which request was approved. The Federal artillery batteries were only 500 yards away and

Colonel Colquitt directed Captain Wheaton to direct his fire against one of them in support of the infantry who were moving forward to take it. The two guns on the Federal left were captured and that part of the line appeared to be giving way although the center and the right were standing firm. The Chatham Artillery's fire was then shifted to another part of the line and the infantry moving forward seized three more of the Federal guns.¹⁰⁹ The Chatham Artillery moved forward to support the advancing infantry but were halted with the arrival of Union reinforcements and found themselves hardpressed and running out of ammunition. Fortunately, the left section of the Chatham Artillery came up when the right section had expended all of their shells except cannister which had proved ineffective in the woods. The Chatham Artillery was now located at the very front of the Confederate line and directed their fire against whatever portions of the Federal line appeared to be giving the most trouble.¹¹⁰

At about 2:30 P.M., Colonel Montgomery's colored brigade was resting at the road crossing. Small arms fire had been heard in the distance, joined after a while with the sound of cannon. Lieutenant Luis Emilio of the 54th Massachusetts recorded the reaction:

"That's home-made thunder," said one man. "I don't mind the thunder if the lightning don't strike me!" was the response. Another remarked, "I want to go home". "You'll stay forever, maybe!" was the reply.¹¹¹

An orderly galloped up calling for the commanding officer, Colonel Edward N. Hallowell, who was given an order to advance rapidly. In short order, the regiment was moving forward at the double-quick towards the sound of battle. As the troops hurried on, many started to lighten their loads by dropping haversacks, blankets, and knapsacks. At the railroad crossing, they were met by an aide from General Seymour bringing the order to move forward into battle. Lieutenant Emilio described what he saw:

Nearing the battleground, resounding with cannonshots and musketry, the dispiriting scene so trying to troops about to engage, of hundreds of wounded and stragglers, was encountered. All sorts of discouraging shouts met the ear as the regiments speeded onward, as "We're badly whipped!" "You'll all get killed." Still farther on was part of a disabled battery also going to the rear. But through this rift and drift of conflict the tired men pressed on, and led by Sergeant Cezar of Company D, found breath to shout their battle-cry, "Three cheers for Massachusetts and seven dollars a month!"¹¹²

The 54th Massachusetts arrived on the battlefield about 4 P.M. The regiment was minus two of its companies, but had a strength of thirteen officers and 497 men. The 54th went into the left of the line; Lieutenant Colonel William N. Reed's 1st North Carolina advanced forward on the right of the Union line so that it formed an angle of about 120 degrees with the line of the 54th Massachusetts. Colonel Barton's New York brigade retired as the colored brigade came up. In the center of the line now was the 7th Connecticut which had moved forward a short distance, lay down, and were

firing their Spencer rifles with sights set at 400 yards at the enemy who was "fairly in view."¹¹³

A soldier with the 48th New York later wrote:

An incident that is well remembered, when the day was practically lost, was the coming forward into action of Colonel Montgomery's colored brigade, the First North Carolina passing between the Forty-seventh and Forty-eighth on the double-quick, and cheered by those shattered regiments as it went into battle. The coming of the fresh troops on the field staggered the enemy for a moment, and prevented an effective pursuit.¹¹⁴

Oscar Sawyer witnessed the arrival of the colored brigade and described their contact with the advancing Confederate line:

Lieutenant Colonel Reed, in command, [Colonel Beecher, the regimental commander was not present] headed the regiment, sword in hand and charged upon the rebels. They broke, but rallied when within twenty yards of contact with our negro troops. Overpowered by numbers, the First North-Carolina fell back in good order, and poured in a destructive fire. Their Colonel was felled, mortally wounded. Their Major Boyle, fell dead, and two men were killed trying to reach his body. Their adjutant, William C. Manning, wounded before at Malvern Hill, got a bullet in his body but persisted in remaining, until yet another shot struck him. His Lieutenant-Colonel, learning the fact, embraced him, and implored him to leave the field. The next moment the two friends were stretched side by side; the colonel had received his own death-wound. But the two colored regiments had stood in the gap, and saved the army!¹¹⁵

Another witness wrote:

These North-Carolina colored soldiers and the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts now held our left aided by artillery, and even pressed the enemy back. The battle rages furiously all along the line, and the slaughter is terrible. Every man seems determined to do his whole duty. No regiment went into action more gallantly, or did better execution than the First North-Carolina (colored) troops. Their white comrades generally take pleasure in awarding them this honor. Men were dropping constantly all along the line, but the living fought all the more bravely. These

freedmen evidently preferred falling on the field of battle to falling into the hands of their barbarous foes. This regiment was not in action over two hours and a half and yet its loss in officers and enlisted men was nearly as heavy as that of any other regiment.¹¹⁶

Lieutenant Henry H. Metcalf, in charge of a section of Company C, 3rd Rhode Island Artillery, was the artillery unit on the extreme left of the Union position. He opened up immediately on the enemy's cavalry as they approached with three and a half and four second shells, mixed with an occasional round of cannister for the infantry to their front.¹¹⁷ When the Confederates were within fifty yards of his guns, Captain Samuel S. Elder ordered him to pull back, which he did, sending one of his guns back to the rear to act as reserve with the caissons as all of his horses were killed or disabled.¹¹⁸

Lieutenant John R. Myrick, Battery E, 3rd U. S. Artillery found himself left in command of the four artillery pieces belonging to his battery after Captain John Hamilton and Lieutenants Eddy and Dodge were wounded and had left the field. Captain Hamilton's last instructions had been to get the pieces off and this Lieutenant Myrick tried to do. The location of the battery at this time was to the left and in advance of Captain Elder's Battery. Lieutenant Myrick got two pieces to the rear but could not get off the remaining two pieces because the Confederate rifle fire killed or disabled the horses and men engaged in the effort.¹¹⁹ Lieutenant Myrick took the two guns he did manage to get off

to the rear and joined Elder's Battery and the remaining section of Light Company E, 3rd U. S. Artillery, under Lieutenant David Irwin, which was on Elder's left. Lieutenant Myrick continued firing on line with Elder's Battery until nearly dark when a wound forced him to turn his section over to Lieutenant Irwin and go to the rear.¹²⁰

An officer of the 54th Massachusetts saw things a bit differently. Lieutenant C. M. Duren, writing to his father on March 7, 1864, about the loss of guns by Hamilton's and Langdon's batteries, penned the following:

The most disgraceful thing of all were those two regular batteries going in--and losing their guns as they did. Why some of our Volunteers would have looked upon the affair with wonder--and disgust. They gave it--as one reason that their horses were all shot --men all shot away from their guns--but I saw the Limbers and the Caissons--fully horsed and men enough to drive them leaving the field without their guns. Shameful!¹¹⁸

What Lieutenant Duren might have seen were the Enfans Purdu which deserted the unit during the battle.

A soldier in the 48th New York had an experience that stayed fresh in his mind a long time. He had been taken prisoner at Olustee and writing some twenty years after the battle from Budapest, Hungary, he reminisced:

I go twenty years back to Olustee, Fla., now only a dream--and, I see myself amongst the guns, abandoned by Battery M; then again I am left alone, firing away from sixty rounds I had in my pockets. The rebels had a good mark at me, standing amongst the guns. They crept nearer and nearer, jumping from trunk to trunk. Everything about me was shot away--my canteen, my haversack, the skirts of my blouse; on the other hand, my cartridges were also ominously disappearing down to the fifty-sixth. I levelled to fire the fifty-seventh

round at a cluster of heads behind a pine trunk; we were at close quarters; I pulled, my ball sped on its way, a crash, and I fell to one side, propping myself up with my gun. At the moment my gun went off, another ball had hit at least its mark, and my leg was smashed; a friendly hand assisted me to a tree and fled for dear life because the enemy advanced, and in another moment all my adversaries came rushing to the tree where I was reclining; all shouted, "Are you the man that was amongst the guns?"

Having told them that was so, they all exclaimed "Bully boy!" One of them began to question me concerning how many men we had in the battle; I told them about fifteen thousand. They spoke about our regiments who had made such a "devilish noise" with their sharp-shooters. Flushed with victory as they were, they only went about three hundred yards beyond where I was and called a halt. I grew faint and fainter, and yet with an iron determination raised myself from my faintness, cut open my trousers, and with the only handkerchief found about me, and the help of a stick, succeeded in stopping the bleeding of my wound. I took out my pipe and finding just enough tobacco, I began to smoke to keep away faintness and kill the wretched thoughts growing apace with the darkness spreading over the battlefield, and to divert my thoughts from listening to the groans of the dying and wounded and from the blasphemous language of some marauding soldiers who were ill-treating wounded negroes.

In this state two young Confederate soldiers came to me, and by holding a lighted match to my face they recognized me as one of the Forty-eighth Regiment. They inquired about their home in Savannah, which they had not seen during the war; they were sons of merchants of that city. I could give them very little information, except what we had heard from the city through runaway soldiers at Fort Pulaski. At last one of them said to the other, "I would like to make the Yank a fire; look how he is shivering! He will not stand the frost tonight." So they kindled me a blazing fire, which revived my benumbed limbs; then one of them unbuckled his blanket, covered me with it, brought me some water, then bidding me "good-by", they left me --not, however, till the younger of them had given me a plug of good tobacco! May these Savannah boys be blessed even from Hungary, and across the ocean may this blessing reach them.¹²²

The movement forward by the Confederate line drove the Federal forces from the position they had occupied at the

beginning of the battle with the loss of three twelve-pounder Napoleon guns from Langdon's battery and two ten-pounder Parrott rifles from Hamilton's battery, along with the 8th U. S. Colored Troop's national colors. The two companies of the 32nd Georgia (H & E) that had been part of the first Confederate forces on the battlefield were credited with capturing Langdon's three guns, while the 19th and 28th Georgia regiments, reinforced by the 6th Florida battalion, overran Hamilton's battery. "We walked over many a wooly head as we drove them back," wrote Henry Shackleford, regimental musician, of the 19th Georgia. "How our boys did walk into the niggers, they would beg and pray but it did no good."¹²³

The Confederate line as it moved forward was somewhat broken in the charge, and as it was being reformed, realization came that the ammunition was almost exhausted.¹²⁴ Along Colonel Harrison's left portion of the line it was being whispered that the ammunition was running out, particularly in the 6th and 32nd Georgia regiments, and no ordnance train was in sight. Colonel Harrison reported this fact to Colonel Colquitt who urged that the ground be held as ammunition would be up shortly.¹²⁵ The units coming down from Georgia had been unable to bring their ammunition wagons to Florida. The ordnance office back at Olustee had been instructed to send ammunition down by train in the event there was any action but the cars had not yet come down to where

the battle was taking place. Colonel Colquitt's adjutant described the problem that existed:

The situation was indeed a critical one, and nothing but the calm courage of our men enabled us to hold our ground. A line of skirmishers was sent forward, supplied with what cartridges were left, and with such as could be found in the boxes of the dead Federals, of whom--happily for us--there was quite a number lying upon the portion of the field now occupied by us. The artillery, reinforced by a section of Capt. Guerard's Battery under Lieut. Gignilliat, kept up a very steady and effective fire, and in a great measure assisted in holding the enemy in check.¹²⁶

Colonel Harrison took direct action to alleviate the ammunition shortage on on his portion of the line. He dismounted, turned his horse over to a member of his staff, and sent the remainder of his staff and couriers to convey ammunition from a train of railway cars one half mile distant back to the battlefield. The staff officers brought up cartridges in "haversacks, pockets, caps, in anything into which they could be crammed."¹²⁷ They made several trips and were able to ensure that a rapid and effective fire by the left of the Confederate line was maintained.¹²⁸ Lieutenant Colonel C. F. Hopkins's 1st Florida battalion and a section of Guerard's battery under Lieutenant Robert Gignilliat arrived at this moment from the entrenchments. The 1st Florida was ordered to the support of the 64th Georgia, whose ammunition was nearly all exhausted, and the section of guns was directed up to the left center of the line.

General Samuel Jones described the heroic actions of one of the staff officers:

To hold a line under a heavy fire which it cannot return is a severe trial to the steadiness of the best of troops. During this trying pause, Lieutenant Hugh H. Colquitt of the general's staff was a conspicuous object to the troops in both lines as he galloped in front of the Confederates, waving a battle-flag and exhorting the men to stand fast not to lie down or shelter themselves behind the pine trees, lest the enemy should suppose the line had broken and melted away and assuring them that their cartridge boxes would soon be replenished.¹²⁹

The 27th Georgia and Major A. Bonaud's battalion also arrived at this time and Colonel Colquitt moved these units quickly into position near the center of the line and a little in advance to hold the enemy in check until the other commands could be supplied with cartridges.¹³⁰ Colonel Colquitt ordered the Chatham Artillery to fall back a little but Captain John Wheaton responded:

General, I think we can hold on five minutes. By that time the ordnance wagons may be up, which will change the aspect of affairs. He replied that he was afraid that we would lose our pieces. I answered that if he allowed me, I would take the risk; that I could rely upon my men. The General responded, "Very well, but be sure and save your guns."¹³¹

Captain John Keely supplied the reaction of the Confederate infantryman to the shortage of ammunition:

At 3 o'clock P. M., our ammunition was expended, fresh supplies were on the way to us, but what good was that, for the enemy, finding out the fact, halted, faced us, and with desperate volleys and fixed bayonets, charged us. We were in a desperate condition, but we fixed bayonets again and advanced steadily to meet their charge. It was a fearful moment, every nerve and even muscle was strained to its fullest tension. When, to our joy, new supplies of cartridges came to us and we grabbed them more eagerly than hungry men ever grabbed loaves of bread, and now, in a minute, we were again masters of the field, for on our next volley the enemy fled precipitately.¹³²

Captain Wheaton felt that one incident in particular involving his battery contributed to the start of the Union retreat:

the result was doubtful. At length the enemy's left began to waver. As they were making a strenuous effort to keep their left centre up to the mark, a solid shot from one of our pieces cut down a large tree which fell directly in their midst. From the confusion thus caused, that portion of the line--severely pressed as it was by our advancing infantry--never recovered. In a conversation I had with a Federal officer since the termination of the war, who was present on this occasion, he remarked that in his judgement that tree at just that particular juncture decided the fate of the left of their line.¹³³

While the falling of the tree may have had some effect, none of the writers on the Union side chose to make mention of it. Lieutenant W. Robert Gignilliat's section of Guerard's battery was positioned to the immediate left of the Chatham Artillery. This was fortunate because the Chatham Artillery had again expended its solid shot and shells and was able to keep firing using ammunition from the chests of the newly arrived section.¹³⁴ The arrival of the ammunition cars from the rear alleviated the crisis the shortage of ammunition had created.

When the 54th Massachusetts came on to the field, General Seymour believed that the Confederates were about to flank the Union left. The 54th was assigned the task of checking this movement while a new line could be formed in the rear. Colonel E. N. Hallowell moved his unit by the flank into the woods on the left of the road, and formed by file

into line, immediately opening fire. Lieutenant Luis Emilio recalled:

The Fifty-fourth formed in a grove of pine extending around on every side over ground nearly level. So open was the forest that the enemy's lines and colors could be seen about four hundred yards distant, with two guns in front of our right well advanced, apparently without much support [Chatham Artillery].¹³⁵

The regiment was being subjected to musketry fire described as "steady but not severe with a flanking fire of shell from the artillery on the unit's left front."¹³⁶ The 54th Massachusetts' commanding officer, Colonel Hallowell, standing on a stump behind the center of the line, directed the regiment. Reacting to the pressure of the fire being received from the overlapping Confederate right, he ordered the two left flank companies to pull back at an angle that would give a better front and protection from that quarter. Lieutenant Emilio described a growing impatience among members of the 54th with the passive type of action they were experiencing. One eager trooper would dash forward beyond the line of battle, fire his piece, dash back to reload, and then dash out again to fire. Shortly, it was noticed, he fell, shot through the head.¹³⁷ Lieutenant Homans, known as an impetuous and brave officer, seeing the exposed position of the two pieces of the Chatham Artillery, sprang in front of his line and shouting, "Now is a good opportunity; we'll try and take those guns!" started to lead his men in a charge, but had to be ordered back into line.¹³⁸ At another

time, one of the regimental sergeants was observed carrying the national flag, moving forward followed by the men around him. They had gone some 150 paces before word from Colonel Hallowell caught up with them, ordering them back lest the regiment follow them into a dangerous situation without support.¹³⁹

In the center of the 54th Massachusetts, the companies were receiving an intensive musketry fire from the front and flank. Sharpshooters were seen in the trees but were soon brought down. Increasingly, however, the regiment's casualties were mounting. The regiment had been firing very rapidly; many of the men, by jarring their pieces on the ground, sent the loads home without using the ramrods. It was observed that the musketry fire of the Southerners was more effective than that of their artillery. Their shells were fired too high, passing over into the trees in back of the 54th. From the heavy gun on the railroad car came reports which dominated all other battle sounds.¹⁴⁰ This may have been the time that Lieutenant Rambo actually fired the few shells he did from the gun mounted on the flatcar.

It would appear then, that at the critical stage in which the Confederate charge ground to a halt because of ammunition shortages, the Union forces were committed to a defensive posture in order to permit some units to withdraw and others to form a line further to the rear. After the Confederate forces were resupplied with ammunition, Colonel

Colquitt sent instructions to Colonel Harrison to move the 6th and 32nd Georgia regiments around on the right flank of the Union forces. The 6th Florida battalion had previously been turned so as to flank the Union left. The result was a concave shaped Confederate line that further overlapped the Union line and was able to concentrate its full fire power upon that line from the front and both flanks. The 1st North Carolina would lose ten officers and 220 men killed, wounded, or missing as a result of the enfilading fire from the Confederate left. Then, led by the 27th Georgia regiment in the middle, the entire Confederate line moved forward, driving the Union forces from their positions. Or almost all of the Union forces:

Every organization had retired but the Fifty-fourth, and our regiment stood alone. From the position first taken up it still held back the enemy in its front. Why the Fifty-fourth was left thus exposed is inexplicable. No measures were taken for its safe withdrawal. It would seem either that the position of the regiment was forgotten, or its sacrifice considered necessary.¹⁴¹

While with the 7th Connecticut in the center of the line, Colonel Hawley received word that General Seymour wanted him to fall back as it was believed that the enemy "were only feinting on our right, and were preparing to flank us in force."¹⁴² Captain B. F. Skinner held his position until he believed the forces on either side of him had withdrawn, then he took the 7th Connecticut back a short distance, faced the Confederate line for a short while, and then moved by the right of companies to the rear some distance to form a new

line. At this position, Colonel Hawley had the 7th Connecticut come into line on the left of a light battery (he did not know which one) with a cavalry unit on his right. Colonel Hawley recalled that the firing here was chiefly by artillery.¹⁴³ Although the 7th New Hampshire would receive a lot of undeserved criticism for its performance on this day, it did have its moment of glory:

One little incident came immediately under our eye, and is particularly worthy of mention, as it showed the coolness of some of the New Hampshire boys, and it will also be remembered by other comrades who happened to be in the same crowd. As we were leaving the field, the writer, by mere chance, came up with Capt. James M. Chase, of our regiment, who by some means had, like the writer, got left, for the regiment had been gone for some moments; the captain proposed that we gather up all the men we could and act as a rear guard, as none seemed to have been detailed to perform that duty before leaving the field, and we at once commenced collecting all the men we could find as we slowly retreated. Our defeat was so severe and unexpected, and our lack of transportation so meagre, that we were compelled to leave our killed and most of our wounded in rebel hands. However, we soon succeeded in stopping and collecting nearly a hundred soldiers belonging to the different organizations, and among them we remember the faces of Sergts. George F. Robie and James H. Caldwell, of the Seventh New Hampshire. The captain, as the ranking officer present, assumed command, dressed the line, and at once advanced towards the rebel line over a portion of the field which our defeated troops had just left until we came upon a rebel skirmish line slowly but cautiously advancing, and whose fire we at once received, at which time a Minie ball struck the captain on the instep of the left foot, but not disabling him. Noticing a heavy line of battle following close in the rear of the rebel skirmishers. we had no alternative but to retreat, which we did, firing as we went, for nearly half a mile. We had now been under fire more than three hours, and as the last rays of the setting sun shone in amongst the trunks of those tall old Florida pines, which sparsely wooded the country round us, we knew we were the last of our defeated army to leave the field; and as darkness was fast coming on, we

hurried along, overtaking the Seventh Regiment, to which we belonged¹⁴⁴

Meanwhile, forward, Lieutenant Emilio noted that at 5:30 P.M., darkness seemed to come early amidst the pine trees. The 54th had taken serious casualties and, from the sound of the battle that came from the right rear, it became obvious that the rest of the Union forces had fallen back. Ammunition was running low (Colonel Hallowell later estimated the 480 men of the Unit had fired some 20,00 cartridges) and when more had been brought up, it proved to be of the wrong caliber.¹⁴⁵ Colonel James Montgomery, the brigade commander who was with the 54th, wanted the unit to disperse, with every man trying to make it back to safety on his own.¹⁴⁶ In the absence of the regimental commander, Colonel Hallowell, who had become separated from the main portion of the regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Hooper, took charge and ordered Color Sergeant Wilkins to stand fast. Getting help from officers and cooperative men that were nearby, he shouted, "Rally!" and a line was formed. To bring the unit under control, Lieutenant Colonel Hooper had it fix bayonets and he then exercised it under the manual of arms.¹⁴⁷ A regimental staff officer, who had ridden to the right, returned and reported that the Confederates were following closely but without order. After throwing the useless ammunition into mud holes and giving nine loud cheers to hopefully deceive the Confederates into believing they were receiving reinforcements:

In line of battle faced to the rear the Fifty-fourth then marched off the field, stopping every two or three hundred yards and retiring again. The enemy did not follow closely, but some of their cavalry were on the right flank. Stray cannon-shots and musket-balls occasionally fell about. After thus moving back some considerable distance, the Fifty-fourth, passing through woods, came in sight on the left of part of a regiment armed with breech-loaders. This body of men retired, and soon another body of men was encountered, which also retired. At last the regiment came up with Seymour's main force, where Colonel Hallowell found it and assumed command.¹⁴⁸

The regiment formed a new line on the right of the dirt road until dark when it was given orders by Colonel William B. Barton to march back to Barber's.¹⁴⁹ It had lost eighty-six men, killed, wounded, and missing.¹⁵⁰

Lieutenant Henry Metcalf's section of Company C, 3rd Rhode Island Artillery, was with Elder's Horse battery that, along with the 7th Connecticut, had formed the rear guard. A member of that battery remembered the situation:

By this time most of the army was in disorder, everyone apparently looking out for himself. The rebels now advanced in line of battle. Battery C crossed the open field to the narrow road leading to the field, and then did the act that checked the advance of the rebel army and saved hundreds of men from being captured or killed by the victorious rebels. When the battery reached the narrow road the non-commissioned officer in charge of the section sent one piece ahead and with the other unlimbered, and loaded with double shot of cannister, waited for the rebel column coming across the open field. When they were a hundred yards off he let the cannister go into their ranks, mowing them down like grass, thus checking their whole army. They probably thought the Yankees had formed another line of battle. We then limbered up and continued our march to Barber's Station and Jacksonville.¹⁵¹

While perhaps exaggerated, it might have added in some measure to the healthy respect the pursuing Confederates had

for the Yankee firepower it had been facing for the better part of four hours.

The fourth stage of the battle saw the Confederate forces advance with the right of their line driving in the Union left which crumbled and fled, leaving five pieces of artillery. As this was happening, Montgomery's colored brigade was committed with the 1st North Carolina on the right, the 54th Massachusetts on the left, and a resupplied 7th Connecticut occupying a position between them. The Confederate line's movement forward was checked by a rapidly growing shortage of ammunition. As this occurred, Confederate reinforcements arrived from the entrenchments at Olustee. The 1st Florida was ordered to support the 64th Georgia on the left and Bonaud's battalion and the 27th Georgia were advanced in front of the Confederate line along with whatever skirmishers from the other units could be furnished with spare cartridges or those recovered from the Union dead. Colonel Harrison used his staff to bring up ammunition as fast as they could in whatever they could carry with the result that some units were able to resume a degree of firing. A fresh section of artillery arrived in time to furnish some of its ammunition to the section of the Chatham Artillery which was in an exposed position in front of the Confederate line.

While the Confederate side was in this precarious position, the Union forces were in a defensive posture,

apparently unaware of the Confederate predicament. The Union units in the forward positions perceived themselves as charged with a blocking mission of checking a Confederate advance while a new line was being formed. In the process, they were taking heavy casualties from an enemy line that overlapped them and was in a position to enfilade both flanks of the Union lines. Several efforts by more offensive-minded soldiers were quickly suppressed. On the Union side, there appears to have been almost complete loss of control by General Seymour and some of his brigade commanders as individual units or parts of units were operating on their own, as best they could. Colonel Colquitt, meanwhile, turned his right and left flanking units inwards forming a somewhat concave line that overlapped and enfiladed the Union flanks, causing tremendous casualties. The Confederate line now moved forward, aided by the cross-fire of the flanking units, forcing the bulk of the Union forces backward. The 54th Massachusetts, left behind, moved to the rear in an orderly manner, keeping its discipline while taking casualties. A line composed of the 7th Connecticut, Henry's cavalry, and Elder's battery along with part of Company C, 3rd Rhode Island Heavy Artillery, screened the Union forces that left the field to the oncoming Confederates.

Notes

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- 2 New York Tribune, February 20, 1864.
- 3 New York Times, March 1, 1864.
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- 5 Ibid.
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408.
- 7 ORA I:35, Pt.I, pp. 286-287.
- 8 New York Times, March 1, 1864.
- 9 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 340.
- 10 New York Herald, March 1, 1864.
- 11 ORA I:35, Pt. I, pp. 298-301.
- 12 Swift, Captain Dana, 249.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Frank Moore, Rebellion Record, VIII, p. 409.
- 15 Crowninshield, History of the First Regiment, p.
262.
- 16 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 307.
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- 18 New York Times, March 1, 1864.
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262.
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- 23 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 352.

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29 Ibid., pp. 179-180.

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31 Samuel Jones, "The Battle of Olustee," IV, p. 79.

32 Ibid.

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47 Ibid., pp. 180-181.

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62 ORA I:53, p. 25.

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64 Ibid.

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CHAPTER X AFTERMATH

In the reports of the battle made by the commanding officers of both sides there is general agreement on the conduct of the battle but disagreement on the retreat and pursuit. Southern General Finegan's report claimed that

At the end of this time, the enemy's lines having been broken and reformed several times . . . they gave way entirely, and were closely pressed for 3 miles until night-fall. I directed Brigadier-General Colquitt to continue the pursuit, intending to occupy Sanderson that night; but in deference to his suggestion of the fatigue of the troops, the absence of rations, and the disadvantage of the pursuit in the dark, and in consequence of a report of an advanced cavalry picket that the enemy had halted for the night and taken a position (which was subsequently ascertained to be incorrect), I withdrew the order.¹

General Finegan stated that he gave repeated orders to Colonel Smith commanding the cavalry to "press the enemy on his flanks and continue the pursuit" but that Smith did not carry these orders out.²

Both southern brigade commanders, Colonel Harrison and Colonel Colquitt, reported that the Federal forces retreated slowly at first under the pressure of the Confederate advance and then more rapidly and in growing confusion. The pursuit was maintained for several miles but stopped with the onset of darkness and, according to Colonel Harrison, by Colonel Colquitt's command. Both colonels agreed

that orders had been given to the cavalry to pursue closely and to "seize every opportunity to strike a blow."³ Confederate Lieutenant M. B. Grant reported that the infantry pursued the retreating Union some two miles to the branch in the road where they were halted by darkness, but the cavalry "did not pursue them beyond a few miles, which is to be regretted, as it is probable that in the disorganized and demoralized condition of the enemy we might have captured a large proportion of their troops, if not destroyed their army."⁴

Colonel Colquitt's adjutant reported that upon the beginning of what was believed to be the Federal rout, Colonel Colquitt had ordered the Confederate cavalry to the front in pursuit,

but they did not proceed far beyond the point where the infantry had halted, when the officer returned and reported that the enemy had gone into camp and appeared to be in good order. The officer stated that he had himself gone near enough to see the troops, and to hear the commands as they were halted and ordered to stack arms.⁵

General Finegan had arrived on the battlefield at about that time and assumed command. According to Major Grattan, General Finegan directed Colonel Colquitt to leave one regiment in front to serve as an advance guard, and to move the rest of the troops back to Olustee Station.

We did not commence the pursuit of the enemy until late the next day, or the morning of the day subsequent. The Federals had been completely routed, and did not pause in their precipitate retreat until safe under the shelter of their gunboats at Jacksonville. Nothing but our inaction and the

inefficiency of the cavalry saved the entire Federal army from capture.⁶

Colonel Caraway Smith, commanding the Confederate cavalry brigade, was later to take much criticism for failure to capitalize on what was seen as the rout of the enemy, by a more vigorous pursuit. His report reads:

The fight terminating at night, and our infantry lines not being perceptible to me through the woods, and the face of the country being cut up by swamps, making it very favorable for ambushing under the cover of night, I deemed it unadvisable to press forward with the whole cavalry force until further information could be had of the position of affairs. In addition to this, after the order to move forward was being executed another order was received to the effect that we were getting under fire of our men, and also that I should beware of an ambush. I attached the more importance to this order because it had already been discovered that a large body of the enemy's cavalry were resting on the opposite side of a swamp from us. The cavalry, however, as soon as possible followed up the enemy and gathered a number of prisoners, amounting to about 150. In addition to this several prisoners were taken by Lieutenant-Colonel McCormick and Major Scott while protecting the right flank.⁷

On the basis of the above report, General Beauregard later subjected Colonel Smith to an investigation because of certain "inconsistencies" in his report and activities.⁸

Specifically:

1. Finegan's report (above quoted) stated that repeated orders were given to Smith by Finegan to continue in the pursuit which apparently were not followed.
2. Colonel Colquitt's report stated that instructions were given to the cavalry to close upon the enemy and seize every opportunity to strike a favorable blow.
3. Colonel Smith's report did not show that the cavalry made any positive attack after the fight started.
4. No identification was made of the person who gave the information that Smith was under fire from his own men

and to beware of an ambush. Further, Colonel Smith could not make out his own lines but could "discover a large body of enemy cavalry across a swamp."

5. General Beauregard thought it curious that in the entire engagement, none of the 202 men of the 2nd Florida Cavalry were injured, and only one officer and three men of the entire cavalry brigade were casualties.
6. Finally, General Beauregard noted that General Finegan's report claimed that Finegan had received information from a cavalry pickett (later proven false) that the enemy had halted for the night and taken a position.⁹

Captain Winston Stephens, of the 2nd Florida Cavalry, in a letter to his wife the day after the battle, wrote, "Then we were thrown to the front and we got during the night some 200 Yanks that were wounded and not able to keep up with the main body."¹⁰ In another letter to his wife, written almost a week later, "If we had only pressed them after the fight, we could have captured the whole army. I heard that Genl. Colquitt wanted to follow them but Genl. Finegan opposed."¹¹ For whatever reason, or combination of reasons, the pursuit was not conducted aggressively and was terminated within a short distance of the actual battlefield. Trooper Lawrence Jackson, had an interesting observation:

Late in the evening we found that our enemy was falling back. The victory was ours! We had whipped them! Whipped them! And all that were not killed or captured on the field were in full retreat. So it now remained for the cavalry to catch those that were fleeing for their lives. General Seamore had taken the trouble in advance to stretch telegraph wires all through woods on both sides of the road to avoid cavalry from making time to catch his fleeing army. When necessary we cut the wires and got most of Seamore's fleeing army that night.¹²

Jackson and his comrades probably ran into communication wire that had been put up during the battle and not with the objective of hindering the pursuit. Nevertheless, it might have contributed to a reluctance to pursue by horse at night.

The Union reports, on the other hand, stressed a relative orderly withdrawal. Colonel Barton of the New York brigade reported that at about six or seven o'clock, the Union forces retired in order:

We first retired by alternate battalions, covered by the Seventh Connecticut Volunteers, deployed as skirmishers in our rear, they in turn being covered by the cavalry, mounted infantry, and Elder's Horse Battery B [First] U. S. Artillery, all under Col. G. V. Henry, Fortieth Massachusetts Mounted Infantry. When at a sufficient distance from the enemy, the troops were moved in brigades on parallel lines, and kept well in hand ready for such formations as defense from any attack may require. The enemy were, however, too badly punished to feel disposed to molest us.¹³

Colonel Hawley, writing sometime later in reviewing an account of the battle written by General Samuel Jones, C.S.A., commented:

General Jones says the Union forces "yielded ground first reluctantly and sullenly, then with some precipitation, which presently became a confused flight. When the Union line gave way, the Confederates sprang forward with a yell and pursued the enemy several miles, and until night closed in on the scene and stopped pursuit."

This must have been borrowed from some of the wild reports made by the enemy immediately after the battle. Our last formation in line of battle (just referred to) was a few hundred yards in rear of the center of the field. It was fast growing dark in the pine woods. Not a yell nor a shot pursued us that long night.¹⁴

Walt Whittemore witnessed the Union retreat and wrote two days after the battle, "The retreat was conducted

leisurely and orderly. There was no confusion, no panic, nothing that indicated hurry."¹⁵ Union Federal Army Surgeon Adolph Majer reported that:

Our troops fell back about 1 mile, and I received an order to bring our wounded as far to the rear as we could reach with our limited transportation. Ambulances, caissons, army wagons, litters, single horses, carts, in short, every conceivable mode of carrying was made use of to secure the large number of our wounded, and with a readiness that deserves high commendation did everyone busy themselves to execute the order. There was no depression of spirits manifested and the morale of the command expressed the brave determination in the words, 'We will give it back to them.'

Our troops fell back to Barber's Station under the protection of our cavalry brigade, which, during the battle, was quietly drawn up in the rear of our right and left. While passing Sanderson I sent the following telegrams:

Surgeon in charge of field hospital at Barber's Station:

A large number of wounded. Prepare coffee, tea, and beef soup.

Post Surgeon SMITH, Jacksonville:

Send immediately a train of cars with bales of hay, lint, bandages, and stimulants. Call on Sanitary Commission.

Dr. A. MAJER

We reached Barber's Station at 12 midnight, and while, unhappily, some 40 cases of wounded had to be left at the ambulance depot, near the battlefield under the charge of Asst. Surg. C. A. Devendorf, Forty-Eighth New York Volunteers, and 23 more at Sanderson (badly wounded), two companies of cavalry were dismounted, this saving an addition of 80 men. We now had to take care of and forward by cars and wagons some 860 wounded¹⁶

Captain Dana, the signals officer on the staff of General Seymour, recalled:

General Seymour ordered me to collect all the wounded and such as could walk, & start them towards Barber's. He ordered Col. Henry to furnish me a detail to mount such wounded as couldn't walk, the owner of

the horse to lead him. At a cotton house near the track I found the floor covered with wounded many of whom had died. It finally took 3 companies of his regiment to mount them all and it was a hard job to get the wounded started. They had to be awakened and scared into going by telling them the rebels would bayonet every wounded man they found

After reporting to the General that all were sent forward that could be moved, we retreated slowly.¹⁷

Sergeant A. J. Clement of the 1st Massachusetts Independent Cavalry, part of Colonel Henry's command acting as rear guard, recalled that his company stayed over two hours on the edge of the field as the rest of the Union forces began their retreat:

Then we followed slowly all night. It was fearful work to keep the men attentive. They didn't "care a damn" for anything. They believed we were sure to be gobbled up anyway. But not a shot did they fire, nor did we discover that they followed us that night.¹⁸

Emilio, with the 54th Massachusetts, leaves us this picture:

Moving toward Sanderson, the narrow road was choked with a flowing torrent of soldiers on foot, wounded and unwounded, vehicles of every description laden with wrecks of men, while amid the throng rode others, many of whom roughly forced their jaded animals through the crowd. In this throng generous and self-sacrificing men were seen helping along disabled comrades, and some shaking forms with bandaged heads or limbs, still carrying their trusty muskets. About the sides of the road exhausted or bleeding men were lying, unable to proceed, resigned, or thoughtless of inevitable captivity.¹⁹

A member of the 48th New York contrasted the approach and withdrawal from the battle:

The march to and from Olustee was a terrible one, the roads often running through swamps where the water was knee-deep; yet there were recompenses, for the day was clear and beautiful on which they marched into that death-trap at Olustee, and often the sandy roads ran through pine forests, and the resinous odors of the trees gave a balmy fragrance to the air, and such was

the brave spirit of the men that the anticipation of meeting the enemy on an open battle-field, where they hoped at last to conquer them, cheered and quickened their weary steps; but the march back through the night, with many of their comrades killed and wounded and left upon the field, and others desperately struggling along on the retreat, was a sad disappointment to their hopes.²⁰

Clark, with the 115th New York adds further detail:

With the stream of men from different regiments I hurried on towards Sanderson

Some lay down along the road and declared that they could go no farther. Others were fast bleeding to death, and some fell down exhausted to die.

At last I reached Sanderson, nine miles distant. Several of us who concluded that we could go no farther, went into a hotel and lay down on the floor. A surgeon soon came in and said that unless we made all possible haste towards Barber's we would all be captured, as the rebels were close by.

We all concluded that it would be better to die walking or even crawling towards freedom, than to starve to death in rebel dungeons; so we moved off towards Barber's.

A company of the 40th Massachusetts Mounted Infantry came along and generally dismounted, helping thirty of our boys on their horses. This saved almost all of our party from capture.

The animal which I rode carried me a mile with great difficulty, and then lay down in the mud to die.

I started on again, when pretty shortly a mounted officer approached, and after enquiring my name, rank, and regiment, assisted me in mounting his horse which I rode two miles, when I was again forced to try the virtues of "shanks horses."

I reached Barber's at 3 o'clock in the morning, nearly dead, and found the remnant of the regiment asleep.

I sat down on a cracker box to warm myself by a camp fire, when I fainted away and pitched into it headlong²¹

Lieutenant Colonel Hall, New York Engineers, in his capacity as provost marshal, galloped back and forth on the line of retreat trying to establish order and rallying stragglers. Upon his arrival in Sanderson about 9 P.M., he found that

Captain Bridgman of the 54th Massachusetts had been doing the same, collecting some 1,000 men. While some of this group were wounded, ranging from slight to very serious, others were just men who had helped wounded comrades to the rear and not returned.²²

Major John Appleton of the 54th Massachusetts, who had been left earlier to secure Barber's, was finally relieved from that duty by the arrival of Colonel Alfred S. Hartwell with six companies of the 55th Massachusetts. Along with twenty-five men from the 8th U. S. Colored Troops who had also come up Major Appleton hurried forward with his two companies to rejoin the regiment. Although firing from the battle had been heard as far away as Barber's, his first warning on the defeat came when he met a surgeon some ten miles west of Barber's.²³ Moving on with his men, Major Appleton halted within one mile from Sanderson and deployed his men to restore order. As Lieutenant Emilio recalled, "The sight of his compact little force was encouraging; and the unwounded, when approached, readily placed themselves in line until some six hundred men were collected."²⁴ Major Appleton soon received orders to escort the logistic train to Barber's, and did so, arriving at 2 A. M. on the 21st.

Colonel Hawley, after reaching Sanderson, put Colonel Abbott's reorganized 7th New Hampshire and Captain Bailey's 8th U. S Colored Troops in line north of the town to block any attack by the enemy from that quarter. After the

stragglers and wounded had left Sanderson, in response to General Seymour's orders, Colonel Hawley used his blocking force to guard the logistic train, "marching those two regiments by the flank and by the side of the wagons and ambulances to Baldwin, where we bivouacked on the ground we left eighteen hours before, having marched about 32 miles, and having been about three hours in a battle."²⁵ The 54th halted at Sanderson until the place was cleared of wounded and vehicles and fires set to whatever might be of value to the Confederates. Then, "with the Seventh Connecticut deployed in rear of the infantry, and Henry's mounted men covering all, the army retired to Barber's destroying bridges and the railroad as they proceeded."²⁶ Emilio recalled seeing the welcome bivouac fires of the 55th at Barber's which was reached about 2 A.M. "Then the regiment, worn out with the enervating events of the day, and the march of thirty-two miles since the preceding morning, went to rest on the ground previously occupied."²⁷ For some the rest was brief, as the two companies who had been with Major Appleton at Barber's for security, were now ordered to picket duty across the St. Marys River. One was put in a block house, and the other on line. They were joined by pickets from the 55th as an attack was expected.

Captain B. F. Skinner with the 7th Connecticut arrived at about 3 A.M. after having been in the rear guard position for the eighteen miles from the battlefield to Barber's

without any rest, his unit most of the time deployed as skirmishers.²⁸ They, too, reoccupied the same ground they had bivouacked on the morning before after having marched a distance of thirty-six miles. Skinner described the march as "over bad ground; many swamps, ditches, pickets, and fences intervened to obstruct my march."²⁹ Captain Dana, the signals officer, reached Barber's at 3 A.M. "There was an immense accumulation of rations here which the staff officers collected in a pile and set fire to."³⁰ Sergeant A. J. Clement, with the mounted force, recalls that his unit reached Barber's about daybreak and "there got out of our saddles for the first time in twenty-four hours, and fed our horses."³¹

In the morning, the casualties were loaded as well as possible aboard the cars that had brought out the supplies to Barber's. One of the wounded remembered the experience:

There were but four cars at Barber's to carry the many hundreds of wounded, but I was fortunate to get on one.

The cars were terribly crowded; as many as seventy being on a small platform, and several of us had to hang together to keep from falling off.

They were drawn by mules and went very slowly. We were the whole of Sunday and until 12 o'clock Sunday night reaching Jacksonville.

Some of the poor fellows suffered badly. They had nothing to eat or drink, were so crowded that they could not sleep, and no chance to change their cramped and painful positions.³²

Those wounded who were not as "fortunate" were placed on whatever ambulances, wagons, or vehicles were available and started towards Baldwin. Remaining behind with those wounded

that were unable to travel or had been left on the battlefield were several surgeons who volunteered to do so. They were joined by Mr. Day of the Sanitary Commission and the Reverend Mr. Taylor of the Christian Commission who had come out from Jacksonville when the news of the battle was received. Immediately loading a car with medical and sanitary stores they had left for the front.³³ Mr. Day had twice already been a prisoner by staying behind with the wounded.³⁴

Colonel Hawley's command, which now included the 7th Connecticut, 7th New Hampshire, 8th U. S. Colored Troops, and the 54th Massachusetts, departed Barber's at 9 A.M. in three parallel columns, following the wagon train. Colonel Montgomery's brigade, followed next, also under Hawley's command. Companies A and E of the 54th Massachusetts were attached to Montgomery's brigade which was formed in line of battle for some distance, covering the other infantry. At the very rear was Henry's light brigade. About a half mile out from Barber's, the 7th Connecticut was again detached to serve as rear guard with the light brigade.³⁵ Sergeant Clement's Company D of the Massachusetts Independent Cavalry was the last Union unit to go through the ford as they left Barber's to follow the rest of the army eastward.³⁶ Walt Whittemore recalled that the road "from Barber's to Baldwin was strewn with guns, knapsacks, and blankets."³⁷

Captain Dana wrote that upon reaching the railroad junction at Baldwin:

We found 183,000 rounds of Enfield and 2 boxes of Spencer ammunition on the depot platform which I was ordered to destroy. One wing of a colored regiment was reported to me to open the boxes and empty the cartridges in a deep ditch beside the tracks. Several of the darkys couldn't wait to unscrew the box covers but used axes to chop them off & got the flat of a sword over the backs to pay for it. A few hundred yards from the station a large warehouse with an immense pile of barrels of crude turpentine was fired and the dense smoke so obscured everything that it seemed night had fallen.³⁸

A soldier from the 7th New Hampshire recalled arriving back at Baldwin at about noon on the 22nd and seeing the supplies being burned:

I think the comrades of our regiment will remember what a dense, black smoke-cloud the resin and cotton made, so black, even, that we could not see the sun, although the day was fine and clear. Each man was given ninety rounds of ammunition and as much more as he chose to carry, in order to save it from being destroyed.³⁹

The 54th arrived in Baldwin about 4 P.M. after passing through Darby's where an "immense pile of barrels of turpentine was flaming and smoking."⁴⁰ What they saw was the destruction of the property of a man named Darby by the orders of General Seymour. It was believed that Darby had sought and obtained protection from the Union forces and then had gone over to the Confederates with information.⁴¹ The 54th was not permitted to pick up their clothing and personal effects that they had left at Baldwin, and they were destroyed with the other stores. The regiment rejoined its A and E Companies and continued on with Hawley's brigade.

Sergeant Clement, with Henry's mounted brigade, arrived at Baldwin later in the afternoon and found there huge quantities of Union supplies in addition to stores of cotton and resin. His unit stayed there that night and the next night, but no effort was made by the Confederate forces to bother them. Then, on the second night at Barber's:

At midnight we fired the whole valuable mass, and soon the whole town was ablaze, as we marched away to the volleys of scores of cases of Spencer cartridges, which were among our military stores destroyed there. We burned every bridge at the many little "runs" and reached Camp Finegan the next morning.⁴²

Colonel Hawley continued on with his brigade to McGirt's Creek where his command bivouacked for the night. The train and Barton's command passed through, and Colonel Montgomery took the 1st North Carolina on to Camp Finegan.

Upon arriving at Baldwin with the rear guard, Captain Skinner received permission from Colonel Barton to recall his men from their position as skirmishers with the rear guard and allow them to reclaim their knapsacks which had been left there under guard. In this, they were more fortunate than the 54th Massachusetts. Meanwhile, Captain Dana had been sent into Jacksonville to get the chief quartermaster to send out "every horse there, with any kind of a harness."⁴³ When the horses finally arrived, it was just in time to pull the train over the crest of the hill as the rebels came into view.⁴⁴

The 54th Massachusetts left Baldwin with Hawley's brigade at 7 A.M. on the 22nd. After having marched only about four miles General Seymour sent orders to Colonel E. N. Hallowell to march his regiment back to Ten-Mile Station and "bring on the railroad train, as the locomotive had broken down."⁴⁵ The foot-weary men retraced their steps, "the thought of cars laden with the wounded nerved them to the task."⁴⁶ Ropes were fastened to the engine and the cars and these were then dragged by pure muscle power as far as Camp Finegan where horses were finally provided for the rest of the trip. Lieutenant Emilio in his regimental history quotes Dr. Marsh of the Sanitary Commission who was present:

Through eagerness to escape the supposed pursuing enemy, too great pressure of steam was employed and the flue collapsed; and here the immortal Fifty-fourth (colored) did what ought to insure it higher praise than to hold the field in the face of a victorious foe, --with ropes it seized the engine (now useless) and dragged it with its doomed freight for many miles They knew their fate if captured; their humanity triumphed. Does history record a nobler deed?⁴⁷

General Seymour had detailed the 7th Connecticut to remain in Baldwin over night and it was there when Colonel Henry's mounted brigade came in. The cars, which Captain Dana had gone into Jacksonville for, arrived about 3 A.M. Captain Skinner was then ordered by Colonel Henry to provide a detail to load the cars, which was done. When the train left, Captain Skinner was also directed to send off half of his command with it. The remainder of the 7th Connecticut was employed scattering turpentine and rosin around the

railroad building in preparation for burning it down. This done, Captain Skinner was ordered to take his men to Jacksonville by way of the railroad. En route he found, between Baldwin and Ten-Mile Station, three cars which had left Baldwin that morning. Captain Mills, with a portion of the command that volunteered, pushed the cars about three miles.⁴⁸ Captain Skinner picked up the rest of his command at Ten-Mile Station, and, after a short rest, continued on to Jacksonville, arriving about 7 o'clock after a march of some twenty miles. Here, he was ordered by General Seymour to encamp in front of the redoubt. In the morning, General Seymour ordered the 7th Connecticut to occupy a position about 600 yards forward and to the right across a railroad, where it stayed for a day or two. The unit was finally relieved to rejoin Hawley's brigade on King's Road at Six-Mile Creek.⁴⁹ It would not be until the unit was in the entrenched lines at Jacksonville on the 25th that its members would be able to catch up on their sleep.⁵⁰ This five day period has to be one of high points in this unit's history. Whether as point or rear guard, they were constantly positioned where the commanding general expected trouble, and their performance under the most stressing of conditions was routinely outstanding.

The 7th New Hampshire had stopped at Camp Finegan on the way back to Jacksonville for a welcome respite:

Here the stores which our troops had captured at the time of our advance, consisting of bacon or smoked

sides, tobacco, sugar, and clothing, were dealt out promiscuously to all the troops, the men of the Seventh managing to get a goodly share of the bacon and tobacco. What was not used or taken by the men was destroyed. We rested here only a few moments, and again started on our march, reaching a place on King's Road about six miles out of Jacksonville that night, where we went into camp temporarily, and were at once ordered on picket duty.⁵¹

The 54th also stopped for a short while at Camp Finegan where the men were able to get something to eat. The unit left Camp Finegan at 4 P.M. on the 22nd and arrived in Jacksonville some four hours later, going into camp on the same ground they had originally occupied at the start of the expedition. Lieutenant Emilio described their condition:

Nearly one half the regiment was without shoes; their blankets and knapsacks were sacrificed to get speedily into action; they had no rations or shelter, so with crippled feet and weary limbs they cast themselves on the bare ground for rest after the march of twenty-two miles that day. The Adjutant-General of Massachusetts reported that "the Fifty-fourth marched 120 miles in 102 hours, yet the roll-call showed no stragglers;" and it should be added, of this time forty-four hours were given to sleep.⁵²

By the evening of February 22nd, most of Seymour's infantry was either back in Jacksonville or in the vicinity. Henry's mounted brigade was at Cedar Run and reinforcements in the form of Brigadier General Isreal Vogdes with Generals Foster's and Ames' brigades were en route. In the three days preceding the arrival of the defeated Union forces from Olustee, all the troops in Jacksonville, including the newly arrived 24th Massachusetts and the 4th New Hampshire, were at

work strengthening the defenses. As the various units arrived, they joined in the work.

Immediately after the battle, the Confederate forces at Olustee were involved in taking possession of the battlefield and all it held. Captain Wheaton of the Chatham Artillery remembered:

The command was halted about twilight, and we were ordered to collect such of the enemy's artillery as was left on the field, and to return with it to our bivouac at Olustee station. We took back three of the five captured pieces. A large number of our men were engaged all night and the day following gathering ammunition and artillery stores from the battlefield and taking care of the wounded.⁵³

It would appear that the Confederate troops spent the crucial hours and days following the battle in cleaning up the battlefield rather than in pursuit. One report by General Finegan stated the Federal forces in retreating left a large number of killed and wounded on the battlefield:

Four hundred and eighteen of their wounded were removed by us from the field, and 400, or near that number, of their killed were buried by us; also nearly 200 prisoners were captured; several officers of high rank were killed and others severely wounded.⁵⁴

Another report by General Finegan, this one written from Sanderson three days after the battle, blamed part of the slowness of the pursuit on the enemy's destruction of the railroad which "delays my movements one day" and then went on to say:

I have several hundred of the enemy's wounded, white and black. I am unable to state the exact number at present, as the ambulances were still engaged in removing them from the field when I left Ocean Pond yesterday morning.⁵⁵

An article from the Tallahassee Floridian written shortly after the battle read:

Some 200 Yankee wounded have been brought to this city since the battle of Olustee, mostly foreigners and negroes; the foreigners were miserable looking fellows, not a bit too good to be put on an equality with the negroes; and in the hospital in every case, whites and negroes were laid side by side, in order to give the whites a taste of the equality they are fighting for.⁵⁶

General Seymour, reporting to the Department of the South on March 2nd, 1864, stated that "reliable information" had been received from a railroad employee at Lake City that close to thirty railroad cars of wounded from Olustee had arrived in Lake City by the night of the 21st. The source also reported that the Union wounded had been taken to Tallahassee "so far as they could be moved safely; the remainder to Lake City, where the citizens generally showed them every kindness, cooking for them and paying them all the attention in their power."⁵⁷

In a message to Beauregard dated the 23rd and written from Sanderson, Finegan reported that he had forwarded 150 prisoners (not wounded) to Major General Gilmer among which were "three negroes" and asking for information as to what to do with the large number of enemy wounded; "many of these are negroes."⁵⁸ He also reported that he "will have more wounded than I first supposed. The list will reach between 600 and 700, 300 or 400 of whom will be fit for duty in a few weeks, being but flesh wounds."⁵⁹

Winston Stephens, of the 2nd Florida Cavalry, in a letter to his wife composed the day after the battle wrote:

We had one of the hottest contested battles of the war on yesterday, commencing about 2 o'clock P.M. and ending half past 5 P.M. and during the whole time there was not a moment's cessation in the fire. Men never fought better than our men did, and God seemed to shield them from destruction as the loss on our side is comparatively light I passed over the field this morning and the dead Yankees and negroes are strewn thick all over the field I am now writing this with a Yankee pen, Yankee ink and on Yankee paper I got several things of value, a blanket, tent, 2 oil cloth haversacks full of provisions and 2 flannel shirts, 1 pr. drawers, 1 pr. gamulletts, 3 canteens and I have got a fine sword from one of my men that got it on the field.⁶⁰

For some of the men involved in cleaning up the battlefield, there were rewards. Shackleford, of the 19th Georgia, recalled, "How we did enjoy captured coffee, hams, bread, and everything else." He also noted that the men of his regiment picked up oilcloth blankets, knapsacks, "and a number of gold and silver watches."⁶¹ Confederate engineer Lieutenant M. B. Grant toured the battlefield the next day and made several observations:

The infantry fire during the whole engagement was continuous, and on our side very effective. The artillery fire on both sides, judging from the marks upon the trees, was entirely too high, and did comparatively little damage. Our men sheltered themselves behind the trees as was evident from the number who were wounded in the arms and hands, thus gaining considerable advantage over the enemy who used the trees to a lesser extent.

As usual with the enemy, they posted their negro regiments on their left and in front, where they were slain by the hundreds, and upon retiring left their dead and wounded negroes uncared for, carrying off only the whites, which accounts for the fact that upon the first part of the battle-field nearly all the dead were negroes.⁶²

Given a situation in which there were large numbers of wounded and dead to be taken care of, and weapons and supplies to be salvaged, General Finegan's pursuit of the retreating Union forces still was conducted, to say the least, rather cautiously. Speculation can be made as to whether his concern for the repair of the railroad stemmed from military necessity or from his former position in constructing the railroad and his current position in partnership with former Senator Yulee and others in ownership of the company. From his correspondence, it can be determined that by the 23rd, the day after the Union infantry was safely back in Jacksonville, General Finergan was at Sanderson, only six miles from the battlefield.⁶³ Lieutenant Grant, in a report to his superior, wrote, "Upon the fourth day after the battle our forces advanced to Sanderson where you found us upon your arrival."⁶⁴ Captain Dana, on General Seymour's Staff was sure that Finegan had only gotten as far as Baldwin by the 24th. He remembered being sent by General Seymour along with six cavalymen under a flag of truce with a request to General Finegan to have the Union wounded returned so that they could get better care.⁶⁵

However:

The real object was to learn where the rebels were as we were momentarily expecting an attack and only General Vogdes and one regiment, the Fourth New Hampshire had thus far reinforced us on the 23rd. It was supposed the rebels were as near as Ten Mile Station where their cavalry had appeared, so on nearing that point I moved in cautiously. . . . I had arrived within sight of the earthworks we had erected at

Baldwin 21 miles from Jacksonville before I saw a sign of life. . . . Soon sixteen mounted and fully armed officers came galloping towards me and apparently intended to run me down. When they halted I asked for the senior officer and handed him my dispatches for General Finegan, asking how long I must wait for an answer; after some study over that, he named the time which showed me that the general was at Barber's and I already had all the information I needed.⁶⁶

Captain Dana also learned that some of his efforts in the previous few days had been in vain. The heat from the burning depot and hotel in Baldwin had dried up the ditch into which Captain Dana's work detail had been dumping the Union cartridges and the Confederates were able to salvage the bullets from the 183,000 rounds he thought had been destroyed.⁶⁷

The request for the exchange of the wounded that Captain Dana had was, in fact, real. In a letter to General Finegan from General Seymour, dated February 23, General Seymour requested:

In view of the inconveniences to which the wounded prisoners in your hand since the action of the 20th, near Olustee, Fla., may be unavoidable subjected, I have the honor to propose that they may be paroled and delivered within my lines as soon as possible, and Capt. G. S. Dana, of my staff, the bearer of this communication, is authorized to make such arrangements therefore as may be convenient, and a horse-car or ambulance will be sent for the wounded at such times as may be designated, should this proposal be acceded to.⁶⁸

General Seymour also requested information concerning Colonel Charles W. Fribley of the 8th U. S. Colored Troops, whose body had been left on the field, asking that his "grave may be so marked that at some future day his family may be able

to remove his remains."⁶⁹ Writing on the 24th, General Finegan denied both requests, stating that the wounded had already been sent forward and Colonel Fribley's body had not been identified.⁷⁰

The matter of the overly cautious pursuit was of particular interest to General Beauregard who felt that it had been handled badly. Complicating the situation was a matter of who was in command of the Confederate forces in Florida. Upon learning that the Union forces had landed in Florida, General Beauregard was unable to have Richmond send a relief for him so that he could take personal charge in Florida. His next recourse was to send an officer experienced in field command to the scene. Unaware that Brigadier General William M. Gardner, who normally commanded west Florida (and who outranked Finegan), had returned to duty from sick leave and was available, General Beauregard ordered General William B. Taliaferro to Florida. Upon learning General Gardner was available, he telegraphed him to tell him to take charge of the Confederate forces that were converging on the area. In the meantime, the battle of Olustee had been fought and General Gardner found himself in the delicate position of notifying General Finegan that he, Gardner, was in command. In attempting to do so, without jeopardizing the continuation of the action that was initiated with the battle, General Gardner found himself and General Finegan at odds.

Upon being notified by General Beauregard that he was to take command until General Taliaferro arrived, General Gardner sent a letter to General Finegan from Tallahassee dated the 22nd of February which included a copy of the telegram from General Beauregard appointing him and which then went on to read:

The brigadier-general commanding, through courtesy and feelings of delicacy, does not desire to interfere with your views further than to stop offensive movements until the re-inforcements now en route reach you. He therefore directs you to take a strong defensive position on the west bank of the Saint Mary's, provided the enemy have fallen back beyond that river. You must have the river thoroughly picketed with cavalry above and below your position, and select a suitable point at any convenient distance on your right flank for crossing your force and making a flank movement when directed. Construct works for artillery to command and defend this crossing.

Maj. G. W. Scott is appointed chief of the vedettes, and will be furnished with a detachment of 150 picked men, including 8 commissioned officers, for the purpose of watching the movements of the enemy and giving correct information.

In event the enemy is on this side of the Saint Mary's, in force you are to act entirely on the defensive, and if strongly threatened to fall back on your entrenchments at Ocean Pond.

Acknowledge receipt of this and keep General Gardner informed at this point of all movements.⁷¹

General Finegan stated on the 27th that he had never received the above communication from General Gardner.⁷² General Gardner sent another message to General Finegan from Tallahassee dated the 23rd in which he suggested that the moment for following up the victory at Olustee appeared to have been lost and the enemy had "doubtless taken advantage of the interval since the battle of the 20th instant to reorganize his defeated forces" and receive reinforcements

while strongly entrenching himself.⁷³ Gardner again advised caution but suggested:

If you are convinced that no considerable body of the enemy are occupying a strong position between the Saint Mary's and Jacksonville, you are authorized to cross that river with the main body of your forces, provided measures are taken to secure your safe retreat across that river if it should be found necessary to do so.⁷⁴

General Finegan replied in a letter dated the 24th that it would:

Give me great pleasure to turn over command to either yourself, General Talaferro, or any other superior officer whom the commanding general may assign to the command whenever he shall arrive in this district and assume the responsibilities of the movements and supply of the troops.⁷⁵

Until that time, however, General Finegan stated that in the interests of the service, he would continue in charge. He finished by stating that his advanced force was in Baldwin and that his whole force would be there that day (24th).⁷⁶ As seen above, General Gardner did arrive and take charge on the 26th but, by that time, the Union position was too strong to attack. In response to an inquiry from General Beauregard in reference to a remark made by Finegan that implied that General Gardner had halted the pursuit on the 22nd, General Gardner wrote:

Brigadier General Finegan did not reach McGirt's Creek with the troops under his command until the night of the 26th ultimo. Having been placed in command, I felt I would be held responsible for any disaster that might befall the army. I halted the army on McGirt's Creek (a strong position) on the night of the 26th ultimo, in order that I might become acquainted with the state of things in the front, and because I considered the moment for reaping the fruits

of the 20th ultimo had been allowed to escape, and the enemy had been allowed time not only to reorganize his defeated forces, but to receive re-inforcements and to strengthen the strong position at Jacksonville, where his gun-boats could be used against us, but more especially because of my utter want of confidence in the brigadier-commanding to handle an army on the field of battle, as manifested under my own eye at the battle of Olustee⁷⁷

In the meantime, in response to General Beauregard's continual efforts to get experienced generals in his department so that he could be free to move around within it, Major General James Patton Anderson was assigned to take charge in Florida. When he finally arrived in Florida, he handled the problem of the friction between Generals Finegan and Gardner by restoring Finegan to command of East Florida (which amounted to a vindication of his actions) and restoring Gardner to command in West Florida. In view of the fact that the battle was conducted on the Confederate side without any evidence of planning and the pursuit of a "routed" Union army took the victors four days longer than the vanquished to go the same distance, one wonders why General Finegan was so honored.

The retreat and pursuit after the Olustee battle, for all intents and purposes, ended when the Union troops were safely back in the entrenchments at Jacksonville by the night of February 22, 1864. The Union forces retreating from the battle were a mixture of orderliness and chaos. There was much more security on the retreat than there had been on the approach march, but within the retreating columns there was

some breakdown of unit integrity, command, and control. A determined pursuit utilizing coordinated cavalry and infantry could have come closer to achieving those "fruits of victory" that General Beauregard believed to have slipped away. The wonder is that the Union forces were able to get back to Jacksonville in the strength and condition that they were in. The Confederate troops were in much better physical condition at the battle having (cavalry excepted) been able to rest the day before; the Union troops handicapped by having had to march sixteen miles before fighting. Although Confederate cavalry commander Colonel Caraway Smith was made the Confederate scapegoat, General Finegan's failure as the commanding general to push the pursuit is comparable to General Seymour's lack of adequate security in enemy-held and controlled territory that saw him blunder into a battle with little or no idea of the strength or composition of the enemy or the ground he was fighting on. Both sides must have been desperate for commanders to retain these two in that capacity.

While in Baldwin on February 21, General Seymour sent a dispatch to General J. W. Turner, Department of the South, informing him that "authentic information" on the Confederate force he had faced at Olustee placed their numbers at from 10,000 to 15,000.⁷⁸ He believed that the defensive position that had been constructed at Baldwin was inadequate to face even half that force and therefore intended to set up a

defensive position closer to Jacksonville.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, the Department of the South was taking steps to reinforce the Union troops in Jacksonville. The 10th Connecticut, headquartered at St. Augustine, was alerted and pulled back two of their companies from Palatka. The regimental commander reported that he was prepared to do "everything possible with the means at my disposal" although he reposed little faith in the sixteen musicians, fifty recruits, and thirty staff clerks that made up his available 180 man force.⁸⁰ General Adelbert Ames, Department of the South, was directed on February 22 to embark some 1,300 troops by 5 A.M. the following morning "with all possible dispatch, sending them to report at Jacksonville as soon as the vessels can cross the bar after receiving troops."⁸¹

The remainder of General Ames's brigade and the major portion of General Robert S. Foster's brigades were embarking on the 23rd at Folly Island, S. C., with the objective of sailing at high water on the morning of the 24th for Jacksonville.⁸² Captain Dana reported that both brigades arrived in Jacksonville on the evening of the 24th and the morning of the 25th, "luckily . . .for our pickets were driven in at noon and Gen. Ames was sent out to hold our line."⁸³ On the 25th, General Seymour reported that his defenses were "sufficiently advanced to insure, I believe, a successful defense" but that, although Ames's and Foster's brigades had arrived, he wished to retain Colonel Louis

Bell's 4th New Hampshire a day or two in case of attack.⁸⁴ He then gave his organization of the troops in the Jacksonville area as follows:

Brigadier General Isreal Vogdes Division

- First. Brigadier General Foster's brigade with the 4th New Hampshire and 24th Massachusetts Volunteers, attached.
- Second: Colonel Tilghman, 1st North Carolina and 3rd U. S. Colored Troops.
- Third: Colonel Montgomery, 2nd and 3rd South Carolina Volunteers and Langdon's Battery of the 1st U. S. Artillery.

Brigadier General Ames' Division

- First: Colonel Noble's Brigade
- Second: Colonel Hawley's Brigade
- Third: Colonel M.S. Littlefield, 54th and 55th Massachusetts Volunteers and Captain James' Battery, 3rd Rhode Island Artillery.

Colonel Barton's Brigade, Colonel Henry's command, and Captain Hamilton's Artillery, unassigned.

Colonel Hawley was directed on February 25 to keep at least a company of Henry's cavalry in front of him as a patrol with the intention of giving early warning of any Confederate approach.⁸⁵ In the same message, Colonel Hawley was informed that General Seymour did not plan to defend the positions currently occupied by the Union troops but to fall back on the positions being prepared at Jacksonville.⁸⁶ Colonel Henry was specifically directed, if not in contact with the enemy, to push a reconnaissance force across Cedar Creek to determine where the enemy was. He was also requested to provide an escort for a Mr. Jackson to the front.⁸⁷ Mr. Jackson was an aide-de-camp to the late Colonel Fribbley of

the 8th U. S. Colored Troops and carried a message from General Seymour to General Finegan replying to General Finegan's message stating that Colonel Fribley's remains had not been identified. This request was for a renewed effort to identify the colonel's personal articles and to allow Mrs. Fribley, accompanied by the late colonel's adjutant, to pass through the lines, with the hope of obtaining more information.⁸⁸ General Finegan turned this request down as he had the earlier one.⁸⁹

On the 26th, General Seymour reported to his headquarters that all was relatively quiet, with the enemy's cavalry reported at McGirt's Creek.⁹⁰ He stated that his defensive works were almost completed, although he needed more guns. He intended to send back the 4th New Hampshire that night and as for his immediate plans:

With a superior force in our presence it will be impossible, probably, to accomplish much in the way of occupancy. Several points along the Saint John's can, of course, be held, but to advance into the interior with such advantages as are possessed by the rebels, in their ability to concentrate, will be attended with constant chances of disaster.⁹¹

He concluded his message with the statement that, since he expected General Gillmore shortly, he was planning no movements other than to concentrate on the construction of the defensive works.

On February 28, General Seymour directed that a signal tower be constructed on the block house on Yellow Bluff so that communication could be established with the coast.

Accordingly, a 110 foot high tower was so built. An eighty-three foot tall station had already been built on a church steeple on the west side of town. Communications were now available from the advance lines to General Seymour's headquarters and from there to the Navy at Mayport.⁹² On March 18, a tower high enough to see as far as Yellow Bluff as well as any vessels for a distance up or down the river was constructed.⁹³

General Gillmore replied to General Seymour on February 28 with the information that the forces in Florida were to be reduced as soon as the position in Florida was secured.⁹⁴ This indication of the downgrading of the priority of the Florida expedition may have been in response to a letter sent to General Gillmore by General Hallack on February 26. General Hallack referred to the letters he had been sent by Gillmore on February 13 and 16 saying, first, that Gillmore's request to come north was refused unless another officer be assigned to command in his place. Secondly,

I infer from your dispatch of the 13th instant that the objects for which your expedition was sent to Florida are mainly accomplished. I presume that no further operations of importance are contemplated against Charleston. A considerable portion of your force will therefore be available for operations against some point of the Atlantic or Gulf coast. You will please report the number of men and batteries that you can send against Mobile or some point in North Carolina, reserving sufficient force and means to hold, with the assistance of the navy, the positions you now occupy.⁹⁵

On February 27, Seymour was directed to send back General Vogdes and to retain only three of the transports

that had been used to bring in reinforcements. Concerning other matters, he was to store the lumber seized by the 97th Pennsylvania from Albertis's Mills at Fernandina, he was authorized to use the railroad iron stored on Amelia Island should he desire to complete the railroad from Fernandina to Baldwin, and he was encouraged to build a field-work at Yellow Bluff to protect his communications on the river.⁹⁶

General Seymour replied on February 28 to these suggestions. He believed that all that was necessary on Yellow Bluff would be a block house and he had two companies engaged in building one. There was no intention to complete the railroad to Baldwin which was no longer in Union hands and, if rail connection should be desired later, it should be from Jacksonville to Baldwin as that route was shorter. The lumber at Albertis's Mill had been burned, but it was anticipated that another sawmill would be in operation within a couple of weeks. It was General Seymour's intention to occupy and fortify Palatka as soon as the defensive position at Jacksonville was completed, and, lastly, he believed he should mount another regiment as the enemy was believed to have five times the number of his mounted force. "No activity can be anticipated or expected, offensively, while the disparity is so great."⁹⁷ He revealed a hardening defensive attitude on February 29 when he informed the navy forces supporting him that he no longer needed as large a force as was presently there.⁹⁸ On the same date, he directed

General Foster to keep his troops constantly employed clearing up and preparing the ground on the opposite side of the stream "so as to increase the strength of Jacksonville as a military position."⁹⁹

The Confederate troops in position on McGirt's Creek were meanwhile engaged in constructing an elaborate fortification of breastworks and stockade. Captain Winston Stephens wrote:

You will see by this that we are gradually closing upon the Yanks and their brother Negroe Our main force rests on the West side of the branch from your Uncle George's old place Their [the Federal troops] main force are entrenching on the east side of Cedar Creek about 3/4 miles from [John] Prices I don't know Genl. Finegan's program, but I think if any Yankees sleep on the west side of Cedar Creek, it will be their last sleep. . . . I would not be surprised at anytime to be thrown into the midst of battle with all grandure and at the same time with all dangers.¹⁰⁰

On March 1, Colonel Henry sent out a reconnaissance patrol from his mounted brigade's position in front of the Union forces at Jacksonville. Commanded by Major Atherton Stevens and composed of two companies and a platoon from the Independent Massachusetts Cavalry Battalion, a company from the 40th Massachusetts Mounted Infantry, and one gun from Elder's battery, its mission was to check out the enemy's position at Ten-Mile Station. They made contact at around 10 A.M. with about 100 Confederate cavalry with two guns about one mile east of Pickett's. After driving the Confederate pickets in, the Union force advanced about three miles beyond Cedar Creek where they ran into a larger enemy force.

Lieutenant M. Leahy, Battery B, 1st U. S. Artillery, was directed to put his gun into action. He opened with shell and case-shot, and then, as the larger Confederate force advanced, two rounds of cannister at the head of their column which was within 500 yards and closing.¹⁰¹ It may have been this that caused the death of Captain Winston Stephens, the one casualty suffered by the Confederate force.¹⁰²

The Union troops began to pull back slowly, followed by the Confederate forces, until they reached their prepared positions at Cedar Creek where they were reinforced by Colonel Henry with another piece of artillery and all but one squadron of the 40th Massachusetts. The Union forces held this position for about one half hour under command of Colonel Henry, who had sent Major Stevens back to ready the Union position at Three-Mile Run.¹⁰³ The Confederate cavalry crossed Cedar Creek, flanking Henry on the right and forcing the Union forces again to retreat slowly, this time to their position at Three-Mile Run. The skirmish lasted from 10 A.M. until about 3 P.M. and covered some five miles of ground. Union casualties were one killed, four wounded, and five taken prisoners, and, while the Union forces claimed they had inflicted as many as fifty casualties on the Confederates, the Confederates only reported the death of Captain Stephens.

On February 22, General Beauregard sent a letter to President Davis from Georgia in which he assessed the current

military situation within his command. Pertinent portions of that assessment are the following:

Enemy has merely withdrawn troops hence to ship to East Florida, where he must be met in force or serious disaster will ensue. His superior means of rapid transportation give him great advantage in concentration of forces. General Mercer reports this morning serious demonstrations in his front on Whitemarsh Island; also concentration on gun-boats in Satilla River, 30 miles from railroad communication with Florida line. I have effective force as you state, but dispersed from North Carolina to Alabama line (of which over 6,000 are artillery in position), not one company of which can be withdrawn without exposure to enemy's penetrating lines of defense of Charleston or Savannah before I could concentrate to meet him. Over 6,000 are cavalry, 2,000 of which are in Florida; rest defending lines of communication between this and Savannah, and thence with Florida, so vital at this juncture; 3,000 are light and siege artillery, leaving about 15,000 infantry now in Florida or en route. Except barely enough for weakest possible supports and pickets for works on John's, Sullivan's, and James Islands and at Savannah, every man I can spare with hope of safety has been ordered to Florida and Savannah. I trust the handsome victory at Olustee, officially reported this morning, is but the earnest of what can be done to cripple the enemy in this department, and I shall then be in a position to send General Johnston at least 8,000 troops of all arms at an early date.¹⁰⁴

The 17,000 men General Beauregard said were in or on the way to Florida were desperately needed elsewhere by the Confederacy at that time. Brigadier General H. W. Mercer, commanding the Confederate troops at Savannah, believed that the troops sent to Florida from Georgia had left his defenses vulnerable. In a February 27 letter to General Beauregard's headquarters, he reported that he was sending the 26th Virginia that day to Florida, as directed, but that:

this city is now left without any adequate means of defense, and is entirely unable with our present force

to resist a serious attack. The heavy withdrawal of troops to Florida leaves me only four regiments, two battalions, two batteries, and several companies for the defense of this city; as nearly all these troops are stationed at fixed batteries from which they cannot be withdrawn with safety, the commanding general will perceive how helpless I am¹⁰⁵

General Beauregard was finally able to get to Florida on March 2, arriving at Camp Milton after two days and nights of travelling with little rest.¹⁰⁶ Since Major General James Patton Anderson had not yet arrived to take command, General Beauregard did so and carefully reconnoitered the Confederate position and its surroundings. In a message to General Sam Cooper written on the 3rd of March, General Beauregard reported that the situation was quiet with the enemy fortifying Jacksonville under cover of the Union gunboats.¹⁰⁷ He estimated the Union forces at about 12,000, with more reinforcements expected, in comparison with his forces which numbered some 7,000, positioned in the rear of McGirt's Creek. Both the Confederate and the Union pickets were located some seven miles from Jacksonville. He closed with the statement, "The victory at Ocean Pond was complete, but pursuit, especially by cavalry, was unsatisfactory."¹⁰⁸ General Cooper replied on the March 4 (received on the 5th) stating that General Beauregard's estimate of enemy's forces was considered excessive and suggested that the Union forces should be "expelled from Florida by prompt and decided measures."¹⁰⁹

In taking charge at Camp Milton, Beauregard reorganized the Confederate forces. He dissolved the temporary division commanded by General Taliaferro and had the units that had composed that division report instead directly to him; General Gardner was directed to report back to his command in West Florida.¹¹⁰ On March 6, he ordered the following:

1. Transfer of the 26th Virginia from General Finegan's brigade to Colonel Harrison's brigade.
2. Transfer the 59th Virginia from General Finegan to Colonel Harrison.
3. Transfer the 1st Georgia Regulars from General Finegan to Colonel Colquitt.
4. Captain J. J. Dickison of the 2nd Florida Cavalry was to take his company to Palatka.
5. The commanding officer of the 4th Georgia Cavalry to render any assistance Dickison may require and to be prepared to support Dickison with his whole command, if necessary.
6. Brigadier-General Gardner was to reestablish the military posts from Clay Landing on the Suwannee to Tampa with the troops that had been furnished to General Finegan when the Federal forces had landed the previous month.¹¹¹

Additionally, on the same day, transfer was effected from South Carolina to Florida of the following units which were either already in Florida or en route: the 18th South Carolina Volunteers, Holcombe Legion, 5th Regiment Georgia Cavalry, Villepigue's Battery, 32nd Georgia Volunteers, 26th and 59th Virginia Volunteers, 23rd, 27th, and 28th Georgia Volunteers (Colquitt's brigade), 11th South Carolina Volunteers, Wheaton's battery light artillery, and one company of the South Carolina Siege Train.¹¹²

Turning next to General Cooper's suggestion that he attack and expel the Union forces (and after receiving

written estimates of the probability of doing so with success from each of his brigade commanders--all of whom replied in the strong negative), he gave the opinion that the Union forces in Jacksonville could not be driven out "with our present means."¹¹³ General Beauregard went on to say:

Had the gap between Lawton and Live Oak been filled by a line of railroad connecting those two points, as urged by me more than a year ago, the reinforcements I was sending at the very moment I was being asked to send 10,000 men to General Johnston would have arrived in time to co-operate in the action at Ocean Pond, and the enemy would at once have been driven out of Florida. But, as it were, two entire days were lost in the passage through the gap of a portion of the reinforcements, and we had to fight the enemy one to two. Our victory, it is true, was complete, but as we were not in sufficient force of good troops to pursue the enemy vigorously, he had time to fall back to Jacksonville, where he has been at work ever since, extending his intrenchments, and, with the assistance of his gun-boats, rendering the place inaccessible to such forces as we can dispose of. If however, the Department be of the opinion that under such circumstances, and with the means at hand, another officer can expel the enemy from Florida by prompt and decided measures, I will be most happy to surrender the command to him.¹¹⁴

General Cooper referred this letter to General Bragg who commented on March 23 in his return endorsement, "No action seems to be called for in the public interests."¹¹⁵ In any event, no further suggestions to attack and expel the Union forces came from Richmond.

On March 8, General Beauregard made some more changes. He ordered Colonel Harrison to locate a regiment from his brigade on the Jacksonville road as near as practicable to Camp Finegan and within one mile of the rear of Colonel Anderson's 5th Georgia cavalry to act as support for the

cavalry. Lieutenant Colonel Charles C. Jones was directed to furnish both the cavalry and its infantry support with a section of guns. The name of the camp occupied by the army on McGirt's Creek was renamed Camp Milton, the 64th Georgia was ordered to Colonel Harrison's brigade from General Finegan's with the 26th Virginia reporting back to General Finegan, and General Finegan was ordered to reoccupy the posts from Clay Landing on the Suwannee to Tampa.¹¹⁶ General Finegan was being stripped of most of the troops he had commanded and sent back to a less important position. Even the camp that had been named for him now bore someone else's name.

What General Beauregard had in mind for Confederate operations in east Florida is perhaps best illustrated by the views that were expressed to Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Roman in a letter written at Savannah, Georgia, on February 27 by Major Henry Bryan, assistant inspector general, which contained an endorsement by General Beauregard dated March 10, 1864, and the words, "The views herein expressed meet with my entire approval."¹¹⁷

General Beauregard reviewed the situation of trying to defend a large area with a small force when the enemy had the initiative because of their naval forces. He discounted fortifications on the coast as impractical, and stated that such fortifications in the interior would only serve as temporary checks because they could readily be bypassed. The

solution was to allow the enemy to land where he chose, but to rapidly concentrate an adequate force to attack him. The best method by which to concentrate would be to use railroads and, to do this effectively, "there must be a continuous line of railroad from East Florida to the points whence reinforcements may be drawn is the most important step which can be taken to defend that country."¹¹⁸ Since the enemy also wanted to make use of the railroads, those portions within twenty miles of the coast must be removed. Additionally, to harass the enemy as he moved inland, a mounted regiment should be scattered in the area ready to assemble at a particular point if word came by a telegraph system which was to be established.¹¹⁹

In General Beauregard's March 25, 1864, report of the "Battle of Ocean Pond" he elaborated:

Unless our present forces should be considerably increased and amply supported with means for a regular siege of Jacksonville, our operations in that quarter must be confined to the defensive; that is, to preventing the penetration of the enemy into the interior, either on the line towards Lake City or into the lower part of the State; to which end a position has been selected on the Saint John's a few miles above Jacksonville for a battery of one rifled 32-pounder, three rifled 30, and one 20, and one 10 pounder Parrott, and two 8-inch siege howitzers, by which, with torpedoes in the river, it is expected transports at least can be obstructed from passing with troops beyond Jacksonville.¹²⁰

General Beauregard showed a much better grasp of the evolving character of modern war than his adversaries. The strategy he wished to employ was based upon a defense of the interior utilizing mobile forces that could be concentrated,

by rail, by horse, or both, at threatened points. Both the initiative and the coast were conceded to the Union. A Confederate "choke-point" was to be constructed on Fleming Island to prevent Union gun-boats and transports from getting into the interior by way of the St. Johns River and rails were to be removed near the coasts to prevent Union use of the railroads for the same purpose. In general terms, this was the same strategy proposed by General Lee when he commanded the department. It was now two years later, the battle of Olustee had demonstrated the wisdom of this approach, and yet Florida was no better prepared to employ it than they had been in 1862. There was still no rail connection with Georgia, internal transportation within the state was inadequate, there were few effective mobile cavalry forces, and former Senator Yulee continued to frustrate efforts to make the strategy viable by his fight for the rail belonging to the Florida Railroad Company.

The Union forces, however, were not looking to penetrate the interior in the immediate future. General Gillmore, writing on March 7 to General Seymour from Hilton Head, South Carolina, after having been in Jacksonville for a few days, informed General Seymour in no uncertain terms that he was not to risk another advance at the present time but only look to securing his own position.¹²¹ General Seymour was further advised to protect his lines of communication and it was suggested that he occasionally land troops below

Jacksonville to prevent ambushes from guerillas. A suggestion was also made that infantry replace Colonel Henry's mounted pickets so that Colonel Henry could save his horses and do some recruiting.¹²²

General Gillmore replied on March 10 to General Halleck's letter of February 26. In relation to the current situation, he stated that the unfortunate events at Olustee had frustrated his original plans and forced him to keep three times the number of troops in Florida he had planned to keep there.¹²³ He went on to state, however:

The value of Florida to the enemy has been overlooked by us to a great extent. I am convinced that they have drawn from the counties along the line of the Fernandina and Cedar Keys Railroad an average of 2,000 head of cattle per week during the last year.¹²⁴

General Gillmore closed his letter with suggestion that he was now ready, after talking with Rear Admiral Dahlgren, to resume operations against Charleston.¹²⁵ General Halleck's March 16 reply contained the following statement, "Until Lieutenant-General Grant returns from the West I presume no additional instructions will be given by the War Department in regard to military operations in your department."¹²⁶ There appeared to be little interest left in the Florida expedition in either Washington or Hilton Head.

Colonel Barton, reinforced by five companies of the 55th Massachusetts and two sections of Captain Martin James's battery occupied Palatka on March 10 and, under the supervision of Lieutenant P. S. Michie from the engineers,

started to construct defensive works that could be held by a 500 man garrison.¹²⁷ General Gillmore's instructions were that "Palatka should be fortified so that the position can be held against great odds. A field-work, inclosed with a formidable obstacle on all sides, will perhaps suffice, and no offensive operations should be taken until these defenses are in an efficient condition."¹²⁸ General Gillmore seemed to be still trying to salvage something out of his original plan to create an enclave marked by the Fernandina to Baldwin to Palatka to St. Augustine line.

General Beauregard was recalled to Savannah on March 20. Before leaving, he gave specific directions on the conduct of future operations in Florida to General James Patton Anderson, now commanding the District of Florida. The current Confederate forces in the area were inadequate to drive the Federal forces out of Jacksonville although an operation against Palatka might be done with some risk. The Confederate emplacements along McGirt's Creek were to be considered temporary until more scure ones were completed at Baldwin. Upon occupying the finished fortifications at Baldwin, General Anderson had the following courses of action to pursue:

Should the enemy advance on you from Jacksonville, you should retire on Baldwin slowly drawing him after you. About one brigade will take position in the lines there, with some cavalry on the left; the other two brigades and main body of cavalry will take position of the right ready to take the enemy in flank and rear by advancing between the Little and Big Cypress Swamps, should he attack the lines in front.

In the event of his again being defeated, he should be pursued vigorously by the cavalry on his flanks and the infantry in his rear. Should the enemy divide his forces by re-enforcing strongly those already at Palatka, the proposed battery at Fleming's Island on the Saint John's should be constructed at once, and torpedoes put in the river so as to prevent its navigation. Should the enemy, after fortifying strongly Jacksonville and Palatka, leaving those two places with only a strong garrison in each, a battery should be put up at once near the mouth of Trout Creek, a few miles below Jacksonville, to cut off its communication with the mouth of the river; this will ensure the fall or evacuation of both places.¹²⁹

General Braxton Bragg's endorsement on these instructions was the terse comment, "The enemy's forces appear to me largely overestimated, and our own operations too defensive."¹³⁰

After some initial sparring by the two forces in the weeks after Olustee, a general stalemate existed by the middle of March 1864, with the Union forces entrenched in Jacksonville and Palatka, and the Confederate forces entrenched at McGirt's Creek, and constructing a strong point at Baldwin. The activity that had been generated by the Union landing at Jacksonville on February 7 had settled into a standoff. The Union forces were committed to a defense of Fernandina, Jacksonville, and St. Augustine, with occasional occupation of Palatka. From these areas, raids would be mounted into the interior to disrupt Confederate communications, recruit blacks, and seize or destroy supplies. The Confederate operations, primarily conducted by Captain J. J. Dickison and his cavalry band, were guerilla type in nature, attacking, harrassing, destroying, or capturing Union facilities and people. In a number of letters

written home from Jacksonville by Justus Silliman of the 17th Connecticut, a headquarters clerk for General Vogdes, a good description is given of the effect of the Union raids.¹³¹ Quite a few cattle, deserters, professed Union men, and refugees poured into the Union enclave as had been envisioned by General Gillmore in his original plan of operations. This flow accelerated as southern fortunes deteriorated. Trade revived in the area with the arrival of more people from the North and from the interior. Esther Hill Hawks, whose husband was a surgeon with the 3rd U. S. Colored Troops, was in Jacksonville at this time and operating a free school. Her Diary confirms Silliman's description of the revival of activity in the Federally occupied and controlled areas during the year after Olustee.¹³² Thought of severing Florida from the Confederacy was ended and the Department of the South turned its attention back to matters elsewhere. William Watson Davis summed up what he felt the Federal expedition had accomplished:

The immediate results of this expedition to Florida were about as follows: the capture, confiscation, stealing, or destruction of cotton, lumber, timber, turpentine, forage, live stock, food, clothing, and military supplies to the amount of more than \$1,000,000; the recruitment of a few score negroes for the black regiments; the capture of a few score Confederate soldiers and eight cannon; the failure to reconstruct the state government on a basis of loyalty to the Union; the loss of about 2,000 men in a bloody battle; the hasty retreat of the invading army.¹³³

William Watson Davis failed to fully appreciate the wider ripples that the Federal Expedition sent forth.

For the Union, based upon the proportions of the number of men engaged and the number who were casualties, the battle of Olustee was the third bloodiest of the entire war! Only the combined battles of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania in 1864, and the June 14, 1864 battle of Port Hudson, were bloodier.¹³⁴ Of the 5,115 Union soldiers involved, 1,355 were casualties for a percentage rate of 26.5 percent¹³⁵ This is remarkable because both Union and Confederate forces at Olustee were approximately equal in strength and fought on a field that offered neither side any significant advantage. Since neither side had a preconceived plan of action, the reason for the high rate of Union casualties has to rest with the Union leadership.

General Finegan, by either design or luck, had the good fortune to have had Colonel Colquitt on the field of battle at the beginning of the action. Upon arrival at the initial Confederate position, Colonel Colquitt quickly formed a line of battle with the units he had, elongating that line with arriving units. The Confederate units deployed successively and were in position just before the opposing Union forces started to deploy. The result was that the Confederates from the beginning were able to bring superior firepower to bear on the Union forces as they were being committed piecemeal. The extension of the Confederate lines to both flanks resulted in a concave line that overlapped the Union lines on both flanks and permitted a devastating,

concentrated, converging, and enfilading small arms fire to be directed at the Union forces.

There was little or no reserve for this extended line. Had the Federal forces been able to penetrate and punch through the Confederate line, things could have become very difficult for the Southerners who had little in the way of a reserve. The Confederate position might have been bypassed, had the Federal forces not blundered into the engagement so quickly and completely, but then the Union forces would have been vulnerable to the danger of a flank attack by the Confederates.

The Confederate forces were inferior in artillery strength to the Union forces and compounded the problem by poor employment of what artillery they did have. Although the southern forces had twelve guns, for a significant portion of the battle, only one section of the Chatham Artillery (two guns) was in action. It was located so far forward that it could have been captured (and almost was had not some more adventurous members of the 54th Massachusetts been stopped by their commander). The initial positioning of the Union artillery so far forward, in the Napoleonic style, was a critical mistake. The guns and gunners were well within effective rifle range of the Confederate infantry who created havoc by picking off the men who serviced the Union guns. General Seymour committed a basic error by using tactics that were made obsolete by technological advances. Attempts to

protect the artillery by pushing forward infantry only increased the casualty rate. Although all sixteen of the Federal guns were put into action, they were much more of a liability than an asset. Writers who were present at the battle, however, commented that the artillery for both sides was generally ineffective, judging by the marks reported to be on trees that were entirely too high. The battle was essentially one of small arms, a characteristic of a style of warfare that would not change until the invention of the shrapnel shell.

Although both sides claimed to have employed their cavalry on the flanks, there is little surviving evidence to show that anything positive was contributed by this arm before, during, or after the battle. By numbers, the cavalry and mounted forces made up some 20 percent of the troops on the field. Further, some of the mounted units of the 40th Massachusetts had been armed recently with the seven-shot Spencer repeating rifles that had once belonged to members of the 7th New Hampshire. The potential mobility and fire power of this unit were wasted. Failure on the part of both sides to use their cavalry effectively forced the engagement into a head-on, toe-to-toe battle of attrition.

Once the battle was joined, the initiative for both sides devolved upon the brigade and regimental commanders. In this, the Union were at a disadvantage. As pointed out by a Union officer:

A great deal of the misfortune is undoubtedly attributable to the fact that all the troops were unused to field service and that Seymour's brigade commanders were all inexperienced colonels. (In the meantime five general officers, four of whom had considerable experience in field operations, were lying idle on Folly Island.)¹³⁶

Henry F. Little of the 7th New Hampshire pointed out a number of mistakes made by the Union leadership:

That the commanding general did not observe due caution is an admitted fact. Any general officer of experience would deploy one or two regiments into line when his skirmishers had developed the even partial strength of the enemy in his front. This should have been done as a precautionary measure, and should have been done as soon as the firing on the skirmish line became at all heavy. This would have prevented any confusion or excitement in attempting the formation of a battle line under a heavy fire and almost upon the line to be assaulted. With such a line already formed, our troops would have swept over the field, and could have easily pushed the enemy back beyond the railroad, capturing some of his artillery, and would undoubtedly have driven the rebel forces on toward Lake City.¹³⁷

Little went on to point out that there were other Union troops in the area or on the way to Jacksonville that should have been moved up to supporting positions at Baldwin, Barber's, and Sandersons with more effective use made of the railroad out as far as Sanderson.¹³⁸ The troops available or in the area that he referred to were the 24th Massachusetts, 55th Massachusetts, 3rd U. S. Colored Troops, 4th New Hampshire, 10th Connecticut (St. Augustine) and 97th Pennsylvania (Fernandina). These units, which were for the most part idle at the time, could have been used by General Seymour to strengthen his raiding force, interdict the area, provide a handy reserve, or conduct supporting operations.

General Seymour did stress the need for a locomotive to provide logistic support by rail. He might have solved that problem had he broken through the Confederate lines and taken the railroad equipment that was supporting the Confederate forces.

On the southern side, Lieutenant Grant noted in his report "So far as I was able to learn there was no preconcieved plan of battle or combined movement of our troops after General Colquitt put them in position on the field."¹³⁹ Once the Confederate forces were directed into line and deployed by their regimental commanders, all movements were relatively simple. One wonders what an experienced commander such as General Beauregard or General James Patton Anderson might have done in coordinating the efforts of all of the Confederate forces on the field.

More success might have been achieved by the Union if the units directly involved in the battle had been up to their normal capabilities. While at Hilton Head, half of the 7th Connecticut had reenlisted and gone home for a thirty day leave.¹⁴⁰ The remaining men were reorgainzed into four companies and, although really only a skeleton regiment, managed to be given more than their share of the critical assignments during this operation. The 7th New Hampshire had over 300 new recruits with half of the regiment armed with largely unserviceable Springfields. To have then committed them to the front lines while under fire after their leaders

had given them conflicting orders borders on the criminal. A crucial stage of the battle was the breaking of the 7th New Hampshire; this could have been prevented.

The 48th New York had been recovering at St. Augustine from the attack on Battery Wagner where it had suffered severe casualties. While at St. Augustine, it had received replacements from a notorious independent battalion that had been broken up in the Department of the South.¹⁴¹ Langdon's battery had also received some of these men as replacements. The unit historians of both of these organizations pointed out the negative contributions made by these "rotten apples." The 1st North Carolina and the 55th Massachusetts were understrength because of men being held back who had either been exposed to, or were suffering from, small-pox.¹⁴² The 54th Massachusetts went into battle minus a major and two companies assigned to security duty that could have been handled by other units. Light Battery C, 3rd Rhode Island, was a composite of men from the remaining sections of its parent unit because so many men had gone on leave.¹⁴³ General Seymour's force included several new regiments that had never been under fire before. General Gillmore's original plan had been to take only seasoned troops and replace them on seige duty at Charleston and Savannah with the newly formed colored regiments. Finally, General Gillmore had initially wanted to take a larger cavalry force on the expedition and this was negated by higher authority.

For a raiding force of this type, the larger cavalry force would have provided the mobility, surprise, and shock that would probably have defeated General Finegan's forces at Lake City and accomplished, at that time, the destruction of the bridge. Certainly, a strong mobile force operating out of the redoubts that General Gillmore had planned for Baldwin and Palatka would have provided the punch to make his defensive-offensive strategy work. The attempt to beef up the mounted force by providing them with the 7th New Hampshire's Spencer rifles was an error that hurt the Federal forces. Had the expedition included a stronger mounted force, this might not have happened.

When the 7th Connecticut's skirmishers made contact with the Confederate infantry, the Union artillery was massed too close to the Confederate line where they were subjected to heavy small arms fire. The infantry regiments were then committed to their support before being fully deployed and were subjected to the same fire. The 8th U. S. Colored Troops, a completely new and green unit which had never even practiced firing their weapons, was one of the lead units in the northern column approaching the battlefield, a bad choice of position by the Federal commanders. The 8th was sent into action with weapons empty to deploy and load their weapons while under fire. The remarkable thing is that they stayed where they were for an hour and one half. The brigade commander, Colonel Hawley, gave them an order to go into

battle without knowing anything about their training and experience and then left the 8th to go with the 7th New Hampshire, having no further contact with the 8th until the retreat. Colonel Hawley also lost contact with Colonel Abbott of the 7th New Hampshire after that unit broke. Colonel Abbott stated previously that he received no further orders from Colonel Hawley until the retreat. Colonel Hawley, the commander of the lead Union brigade, lost control of his brigade, remaining with his former regiment the 7th Connecticut until the retreat. When needed as a brigade commander, he was playing regimental commander.

Colonel Barton's New York brigade performed creditably, but by this time the Confederate line had been established and overlapped the Union right flank. The arrival of Colonel Montgomery's colored brigade initiated a defensive posture by the Union forces at a time when the Confederate line had about exhausted their ammunition, a situation of which the Union leadership was unaware. The enfilading fire by the 6th Florida on one side of the Union line and that of the 6th and 32nd Georgia on the other side were strong contributions to the Confederate victory. The success of the Confederate side has to be largely attributable to the rapid organization of their line by Colonel Colquitt, enabling the Southerners to bring maximum firepower to bear on the northern troops. This success was aided by the constant pressure the Confederates kept on the Federal forces, giving the Northerners no

breathing space in which to regroup. After brilliant execution on the battlefield, southern fortunes decline with the start of the northern retreat.

The Union forces were allowed to conduct a generally organized and controlled retreat, while the Confederate forces, who had done so well up to this point, lost a tremendous opportunity. The Union forces managed to keep an effectivescreen in place behind which they brought off a large part of their force along with with their wounded and some supplies. General Finegan, as the senior Confederate commander, has to bear the responsibility for this failure to pursue immediately and closely. He compounded this failure by not organizing an effective pursuit within the next few days. At the end of the battle, the Confederate troops were better organized and in better physical and psychological shape than the Union troops. It is with good reason that General Beauregard was upset over the conduct of the pursuit.

In his initial assignment of units to the expedition, General Gillmore limited the amount of medical supplies and ambulances to be brought on the assumption that there would be minimum casualties. In view of what happened, this proved costly in terms of what could be done for and with casualties. The number of wounded who might have received saving treatment or at least removed from the battlefield can only be speculated. It did not help General Gillmore's reputation with his troops when it was learned that he was at

a party when the first wounded from the battle arrived by ship at Hilton Head.¹⁴⁴

The treatment of colored prisoners is still an open area of inquiry. Lieutenant Colonel A. H. McCormick of the 2nd Florida Cavalry made a speech to his men before the battle claiming the blacks were there to rape and pillage and stating he would take no casualties.¹⁴⁵ The wounded man from the 48th New York claimed he heard "marauding soldiers who were ill-treating wounded negroes."¹⁴⁶ Brigadier General John P. Hatch wrote a September 25, 1864, letter to Major General E. A. Hitchcock, commissioner for the Exchange of Prisoners, in which he stated:

Soon after the battle of Olustee, in Florida, a list of wounded and prisoners in the hands of the enemy was forwarded to our lines by the commander of the rebel army. The very small number of colored prisoners attracted immediate attention, as it was well known that the number left wounded on the field was large.

It is well known that most of the wounded colored men were murdered on the field. Those outrages were perpetrated, so far as I can ascertain, by the Georgia regulars and the Georgia Volunteers of Colquitt's brigade.

As many of these troops are now in our hands as prisoners, an investigation of the circumstances might easily be made.

All accounts represent the Florida troops as not engaged in the murders.¹⁴⁷

The report received from the rebel commander he mentioned was General Finegan's report that he had "forwarded 150 prisoners of which only three were negroes."¹⁴⁸ However, when Brigadier General J. W. Turner, General Gillmore's chief-of-staff, was being questioned by the Congressional Joint

Committee on the Conduct of the War, which investigated the Federal expedition, the testimony went like this:

Question by Mr. Chandler:

Do you know anything about the treatment of our colored soldiers received from the enemy when taken prisoners?

Answer by General Turner:

Not particularly, but I have questioned nearly all the deserters that have come in from the enemy's lines since the battle of Olustee, and we are receiving them every week. With regard to the treatment of our colored soldiers, and the universal report is that they receive the same treatment as our white soldiers; that they are all put in the same room together.

Question by Mr. Chandler:

And no outrages committed upon them?

Answer by General Turner:

None whatever that I have learned.¹⁴⁹

Thenine days that intervened between the skirmish at Lake City and the start of the Federal raid towards the Suwannee River enabled the Confederate forces to build up a strength almost equal to the Union forces. Most of those southern troops had to come by way of one railroad which could have been seriously damaged, or, at the least, watched to give advance warning of what was being done by the Confederate side. While no commander in a battle has all the intelligence information he would like to have, it is a cardinal sin to not try to get all that can be obtained. General Seymour's failure to learn of the Confederate buildup in the nine days prior to Olustee and his failure to interdict the area of operations was compounded by a failure

to provide adequate security while on the march in enemy controlled territory.

Looking at the larger picture, the demonstration by General Schimmelfenning on John's Island would have accomplished its purpose had General Seymour not procrastinated. As it was, it was too early and too ineffective and did not serve its purpose of freezing in place long enough possible reinforcements from Georgia. General Seymour has to share some of the blame for the ineffectiveness of the diversion. Coordination between the Departments of the South and Gulf might have produced the type of combined operation that General Beauregard most feared when he inquired about a second landing at St. Marks. With most of the Confederate troops defending Florida concentrated at Olustee, a small raiding party from the Gulf would have had an easy time destroying the bridge General Seymour was after. Such coordination was General Gillmore's responsibility.

Up until about the 17th of February, the Union strategy, that which Gillmore intended to use, of occupying certain key defended points while pushing out raiding parties in different directions, was highly effective as witnessed by the Gainesville and King's Ferry raids. To meet the threat posed by the Federal expedition, General Beauregard was forced to weaken the defenses around Savannah and Charleston by sending 15,000 troops to Florida to protect the

vitally needed shipments of commissary supplies. This came at a time when his own Atlantic coast defenses were being seriously depleted by the expiration of enlistments of a significant part of his own army. To complete the squeeze, General Beauregard delayed sending the 10,000 troops Richmond had requested for the Army of the Tennessee which was losing the vital areas of East Tennessee and about to open the gates to Georgia to the Union forces. The delay in arrival of the reinforcements for the Army of the Tennessee did not help that army's situation at all. At the same time, General Beauregard was fortunate that the Union leadership did not take advantage of his weakened defenses and run a substantial operation against Savannah, Charleston, the Branchville railroad junction, or similar targets.

Union armies taking Knoxville and Chattanooga in the fall of 1863 severed the heavy-duty supply line from Atlanta to Richmond complicating the supply of General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. There was pressure for a spring offensive among the Confederate leadership but General Johnston in Mississippi and later in North Georgia and General Bragg in Tennessee both claimed supply, transportation, and manpower shortages.¹⁵⁰ General Lee's chief commissary reported on February 28th that the Army of Northern Virginia was down to two day's bread and only a few day's meat.¹⁵¹ The primary source of the problem was deteriorating rail transportation. Nevertheless, the Federal

expedition into Florida during the height of the Confederate supply crisis of the winter of 1864 disrupted for a while shipment of commissary supplies from Florida and added to that crisis. There was some recruitment of blacks for Union units as a result of the expedition but the psychological effect upon both southern whites and blacks of seeing free, armed, and effective black Union soldiers in the Florida interior must have had some effect.

Even though the Confederates won at Olustee, Major George W. Scott, the Florida cavalryman, wrote a detailed letter to his wife telling her where to go in the interior to escape the Yankees.¹⁵² He was expressing the fear that other incursions were to follow. Others may have felt the same. Certainly a lot of evidence exists of the widespread apathy for the war and Confederate cause that resulted in increasing numbers of deserters, refusgees, and professed "Union men" entering the Union lines after the battle of Olustee.

The expedition did not achieve the restoration of Florida to the Union. President Lincoln was initially castigated by the press for sacrificing 5,000 soldiers for three nominating votes. However, shortly after the Olustee defeat, the New York Times published an editorial on "The Real Military Importance of Florida" which stated: "We trust that, despite the ill-luck that has met the opening of the Florida campaign, the work may still be kept up, if its results should promise to be really as important as

surmised"[in severing Confederate supply lines.]¹⁵³ The New York Times later published two more editorials defending the president; one acquitted him of any blame connected with the Olustee defeat and placed the blame on the military commanders involved.¹⁵⁴ The Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War exonerated the president but strangely enough did not place any blame on the military commanders. Nor did General Gillmore follow up on what was a clear case of insubordination and disobedience of orders by General Seymour. President Lincoln had never intended the operation to be directed at restoration of Florida to the Union as has been previously established in this paper by both his statements and that of John Hay, his personal secretary. There was some political gain though. A number of Floridians made expressions of loyalty to the Union, and a wide variety and quantity of commodities useful to the Confederate forces were seized or destroyed. These were all positive results of the Federal expedition, generally overlooked because of the failure at Olustee.

General Seymour's blundering in allowing his forces to be committed piecemeal and defeated in detail (something he had done before in the abortive attack on Battery Wagner) pretty well ended hopes for what could have been achieved. General Seymour was too limited in vision to have commanded the advance force of the Federal expedition. He was more concerned with the idea of preventing the Confederacy

from removing rail iron from Florida rather than with the possibilities of what a Union force with the advantage of surprise and mobility could do over a large area that was a key source, at that time, for subsistence supplies. His disregard for security while in the enemy's territory, his failure to develop reliable intelligence, his failure to appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of his own units, his inertia when his forces had the advantage, his too rapid piecemeal commitment of his units into an unknown situation, and his contradictory statements and behavior within a short period of time were responsible for the failure of what was potentially, a low cost, significant Union victory. General Gillmore shares the blame on a higher level for not thinking in larger terms, coordinating with other commands, planning adequately, and in his choice of subordinate leaders. Between the two, Generals Seymour and Gillmore, a beautiful opportunity was lost to demonstrate the power of combined operations and provide a classic example of a military operation that was characteristic of the new form of warfare by waging war on the enemy's resources but with minimum destruction. General William T. Sherman would soon demonstrate successfully a more violent way of doing the same thing.

On the Confederate side, General Finegan received a lot of credit for doing relatively little. One wonders how he was able to keep himself so busy so as not to appear on

the battlefield until the Union forces were in full retreat. The failure to coordinate the efforts of the individual Confederate forces and immediately to pursue the defeated enemy rests on his shoulders. Colonel Colquitt did fine with the infantry, but there was not enough use made of the artillery and cavalry. Given all the blunders that General Seymour made, he was fortunate in having General Finegan for an opponent.

As a postscript to the battle, Lieutenant T. E. Buckman reported the following ordnance and ordnance stores that were collected on the battlefield and along the line of Union retreat:

Napoleon guns	3
Ten-pounder Parrott guns	2
Small arms	1,600
Accouterments (sets)	400
Small-arm ammunition(rounds)	130,000 ¹⁵⁵

The small arms were distributed among the Confederate infantry and cavalry, which, in the case of the Florida cavalry was sorely needed. The artillery pieces were distributed among the Chatham, Gamble, and Guerard batteries. The Milton Light Artillery received nothing to replace what they had lost. For the other Florida units, at least, it was a much needed and welcome supply.

Notes

- 1 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 332.
- 2 Ibid
- 3 Ibid., pp. 344, 350.
- 4 Ibid., p. 341.
- 5 Charles C. Jones, Historical Sketch of the Chatham Artillery, p. 183.
- 6 Ibid., pp. 183-184.
- 7 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 353.
- 8 Ibid., pp. 353-356.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Winston Stephens to Octavia Stephens, February 21, 1864, Stephens Papers
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Lawrence Jackson, "Memoirs of the Battle of Olustee," Edward C. F. Sanchez Papers.
- 13 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 302.
- 14 Samuel Jones, "The Battle of Olustee," IV, p. 80.
- 15 New York Times, March 1, 1864.
- 16 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 300.
- 17 Swift, "Capt. Dana", 251.
- 18 Crowninshield, First Regiment, p. 264.
- 19 Emilio, 54th Massachusetts, p. 170.
- 20 Palmer, Forty-Eighth New York, p. 135.
- 21 Clark, Iron Hearted Regiment, p. 89.
- 22 Bowerem, New York Tribune, March 1, 1864.
- 23 Emilio, 54th Massachusetts, p. 171.

- 24 Ibid.
- 25 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 305.
- 26 Emilio, 54th Massachusetts, p. 170.
- 27 Ibid., pp. 171-172.
- 28 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 305.
- 29 Ibid., p. 309.
- 30 Swift, "Capt.Dana," 251.
- 31 Crowninshield, First Regiment, p. 264.
- 32 Clark, Iron Hearted Regiment, pp. 89-90.
- 33 New York Times, March 1, 1864.
- 34 New York Tribune, March 1, 1864.
- 35 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 305.
- 36 Crowninshield, First Regiment, p. 254.
- 37 New York Times, March 1, 1864.
- 38 Swift, "Capt. Dana," 251.
- 39 Little, Seventh Regiment, pp. 228-229.
- 40 Emilio, 54th Massachusetts, p. 173.
- 41 New York Tribune, March 1, 1864.
- 42 Crowninshield,First Regiment, p. 264.
- 43 Swift, "Capt. Dana," 251-152.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 Emilio, 54th Massachusetts, p. 174.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 Ibid., pp. 174-175.
- 48 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 309.
- 49 Ibid.

50 Stephen Walkley, History of the Seventh Connecticut Volunteer Infantry Hawley's Brigade, Terry's Division, Tenth Army Corps, 1861-1865 (Hartford: n. p., 1905), p. 123.

51 Little, Seventh Regiment, p. 229.

52 Emilio, 54th Massachusetts, p. 175.

53 Charles C. Jones, Historical Sketch of the Chatham Artillery, p. 188.

54 ORA I:35, Pt.I, pp.332-333.

55 Ibid., p. 227.

56 Clark, Iron Hearted Regiment, p. 92.

57 ORA I:35, Pt.II, p. 7.

58 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 328.

59 Ibid.

60 Winston Stephens to Octavia Stephens, February 21, 1864, Stephens Papers.

61 Richard McMurray, "The Battle of Olustee," Civil War Times 16 (January, 1978): 20-21.

62 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 341.

63 Ibid., p. 333.

64 Ibid., p. 341.

65 Swift, "Capt. Dana," 252.

66. Ibid.

67 Ibid., p. 253.

68 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 328.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid., p. 330.

71 Ibid., p. 335.

72 Ibid.

- 73 Ibid.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 Ibid., p. 336.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 Ibid., p. 334.
- 78 Ibid., p. 488.
- 79 Ibid.
- 80 Ibid., p. 489.
- 81 Ibid., pp. 488-489.
- 82 Ibid., p. 489.
- 83 Swift, "Capt. Dana," 253; ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 491.
- 84 ORA I:35, Pt.I. p. 491.
- 85 Ibid., p. 492.
- 86 Ibid.
- 87 Ibid., p. 493.
- 88 Ibid.
- 89 Ibid., p. 496.
- 90 Ibid., p. 495.
- 91 Ibid.
- 92 Swift, "Capt. Dana," 253.
- 93 Ibid, p. 254.
- 94 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 496.
- 95 Ibid., pp. 493-494.
- 96 Ibid. pp. 496-497.
- 97 Ibid., p. 498.
- 98 Ibid., p. 499.

99 Ibid.

100 Winston Stephens to Octavia Stephens, February 27, 1864, Stephens Papers.

101 ORA I:35 Pt.I, pp. 367-368.

102 Ellen Hodges Patterson, "The Stephens Family in East Florida: A Profile of Plantation Life Along the St. Johns River, 1859-1864" (Master's Thesis, University of Florida, 1979), p. 94.

103 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 365.

104 Ibid., pp. 112-113.

105 Ibid., pp. 644-645.

106 Roman, Beauregard, p. 189.

107 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 114.

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid.

110 ORA I:35, Pt.II, p. 332.

111 Ibid., p. 333.

112 Ibid.

113 Ibid., pp. 334-338.

114 Ibid., p. 334.

115 Ibid.

116 Ibid., p. 340.

117 ORA I:35, Pt.I, pp. 645-646.

118 Ibid.

119 Ibid.

120 Ibid., pp. 323-324.

121 ORA I:35, Pt.II, p. 9.

122 Ibid., pp. 9-10.

- 123 Ibid., p. 16.
- 124 Ibid.
- 125 Ibid.
- 126 Ibid., p. 20.
- 127 Ibid., p. 15.
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- 132 Gerald Schwartz, ed., A Woman Doctor's Civil War: Esther Hill Hawks' Diary (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1984), passim.
- 133 William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 295.
- 134 McWhiney and Jamieson, Attack And Die, p. 10.
- 135 Ibid.
- 136 John Chipman Gray and John Codman Ropes, War Letters, 1862-1865 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1927), p. 308.
- 137 Little, Seventh New Hampshire, pp. 226-227.
- 138 Ibid.
- 139 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 341.
- 140 John Niven, Connecticut For The Union: The Role of the State in the Civil War (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), p. 180.
- 141 Palmer, Forty-Eighth New York, p. 130.
- 142 ORA I:35, Pt.I, pp. 480-481.
- 143 Patrick Egan, The Florida Campaign p. 6.

144 Free South cited by Clark, Iron Hearted Regiment, pp. 93-94.

145 Lawrence Jackson, "Memoirs of the Battle of Olustee," Edward C. F. Sanchez Papers.

146 Palmer, Forty-Eighth New York, p. 136.

147 ORA II:7, p. 876.

148 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 328.

149 Supplemental Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War 2 vols. (Washington: 1866)

150 Goff, Confederate Supply, p. 208.

151 Ibid.

152 Clifton Paisley, "How To Escape The Yankees: Major Scott's Letter to His Wife At Tallahassee, March 1864," Florida Historical Quarterly 50 (July, 1971).

153 Richard A. Martin, "The New York Times Views Civil War Jacksonville," Florida Historical Quarterly 53 (April, 1974): 425.

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155 ORA I:35, Pt.I, p. 342.

CHAPTER XI CONCLUSION

The 1864 Federal expedition into Florida had the potential of being an early classic example of modern warfare. The objectives stated in the requests for permission to stage the expedition were a combination of political, military, economic, social, and psychological ones whose accomplishment, in terms of the "zero-sum" game, would have resulted in a significant Federal gain and proportionate Confederate loss. The Federal expedition failed in terms of the realization of its full potential because its execution at critical points involved people with limited vision and abilities. The expedition was not a total failure; it did have successes, some more long range than immediate. An examination of its initial objectives and accomplishments might assist in reaching a better evaluation of the expedition.

The expedition did not obtain the numbers of black recruits for the colored regiments in the Department of the South that had been anticipated. The black units that participated did demonstrate by their presence and the publicizing of the Emancipation Proclamation that freedom was available to those still in slavery in the South. No information is available on how many blacks eventually left

their masters and headed for the Federal lines because of this expedition. Nor is specific information available on the effect on southern morale of seeing or hearing of large units of well-armed and equipped black troops moving through the countryside. The effect of the participation of blacks did not diminish any of the fear of slave insurrection or increase the peace of mind of so many in Florida and elsewhere who lived as a white minority among the blacks.

The heroic behavior of the 54th Massachusetts at Olustee, after their equally heroic performance at Battery Wagner, provided concrete proof of the courage and ability of the well trained and led black soldier in combat. These attributes were demonstrated to a lesser degree by the 55th Massachusetts and the 1st North Carolina. The unfortunate 8th U. S. Colored Troops was a victim of circumstances beyond its control. Even under extreme conditions, its inexperienced and untrained members did not break and run but died in groups where they stood. Their misfortune was the result of the mistakes of others. While gaining few new black recruits, the expedition did have a positive effect on Federal efforts because of the presence of black troops and proof of their ability under fire.

Politically, the expedition had the potential of severing Florida off from the Confederacy and restoring the state to the Union, as had already been done in Louisiana and was underway in other states. The defeat at Olustee, after

the bitter experiences of the previous Union evacuations of Jacksonville, dampened efforts at restoration. Union occupation of an enclave marked by a line from Fernandina to Baldwin to Palatka to St. Augustine, as originally intended by General Gillmore, might have achieved the stability and security that would have led to restoration via Lincoln's "10 percent" plan. Restoring Florida to the Union, however, was not the major motive of the expedition as others have inferred. Neither President Lincoln nor John Hay intended the expedition be directed towards that purpose, and John Hay made this clear to General Gillmore before the expedition took place. The fact that restoration did not take place has contributed to the belief that the expedition was a total failure. After the expedition, the continued presence of Federal forces in East Florida and their activities solidified Federal control over that area to the point where some success was made in recruiting members for a white Federal cavalry unit. The expedition did not sever Florida from the Confederacy; in effect, the withdrawal of troops from Florida by the end of 1862 had to a large degree already accomplished that. Politically, the power base of those who would be in charge during Reconstruction was being consolidated by the continued presence of Federal troops in Florida, while the power base of those who had led the movement towards secession was being eroded. Progress towards the less obvious but longer range goal of ensuring

that Florida would willingly stay within a restored Union was also being made.

The disruption of the rail system in northern Florida was accomplished to a lesser degree than intended. The bridge over the Suwannee River was not destroyed; this could have been easily accomplished with either a little coordination of effort between the Federal Departments of the Gulf and South or better use by Generals Gillmore and Seymour of speed and more decisive action to capitalize on their initial advantage of surprise and superiority of forces. Federal efforts to prevent the removal of rails were aided by those of David L. Yulee who successfully delayed by court action the removal of rail from the line of the Florida Railroad Company that he controlled. Eventually, some of those rails were used in the Live Oak to Lawton connector line that tied the Florida and Georgia rail systems together, but that would take place in 1865, too late for effective use during the Civil War.¹

The Federal retreat from Olustee to Jacksonville gave control of the rail junction at Baldwin to the Confederate forces. Control of Baldwin was a key element in the Federal plans of General Gillmore. It could have been a perfect example of the execution of General George B. McClellan's concept of the offensive-defensive strategy whereby key points on the Confederate lines of communication were to be seized and defended, forcing the Confederates into making

costly attacks. The Federal forces eventually raided Baldwin, destroying the Confederate fortifications there, and forcing the Confederates to move their transportation activities further to the westward. Even then, Federal raids from Jacksonville and from various places on the Gulf on the Florida rail system to destroy bridges and tear up track continued until the end of the war. Baldwin was no longer the key transportation artery it had been before the Federal expedition, and Confederate efforts at moving people and materials were hampered by its loss. The already limited rail system in Florida was able to continue in operation until the end of the war but was restricted to middle Florida and subjected to periodic disruption.

In terms of availability of commissary supplies, Florida was much more valuable to the Confederacy in 1864 than she had been in 1861. Federal action had progressively reduced the areas from which the Confederacy could draw subsistence supplies to the point where supplies from Florida were a major factor in the logistical support of both General Bragg's and General Beauregard's armies. The Federal expedition's objective of cutting off the shipment of commissary supplies from Florida may have been the most important of any of the stated objectives. The possibility of restoring Florida to the Union, however, forced the expedition to operate under strict restraints against destroying private property. This was evidenced, in

particular, during the Gainesville raid where some \$2,000,000 worth of property was left untouched by the Federal forces. Although property was destroyed at Baldwin, Barbers, and Sanderson, this property was clearly identified as Confederate supplies. Later in the year, General Sherman would be less discriminatory and more effective in his destructive efforts to bring the war home to the Confederacy.

The Federal efforts to cut off the source of commissary supplies had only a temporary effect. After Olustee, shipment of supplies resumed over modified transportation routes but in reduced amounts. Availability of those supplies created some controversy in Florida between Confederate commissary agents collecting the "tithe," impressment agents buying at an arbitrary figure, local officials purchasing food for the destitute in their area, and merchants trading for a profit.² The amount of supplies that were available to the Confederacy was reduced from earlier figures by a steadily decreasing productivity due to decreased agricultural acreage and manpower and raids by Federal armies and dissident elements within the state that confiscated, stole, or destroyed crops and storehouses. Additionally, unpatriotic citizens evaded taxes, increased amounts of the state's resources were needed for destitute members of soldiers families, and "Yankee carpetbaggers" exploited the local situation. The deteriorating economic

situation contributed to hoarding, resisting impressment, and profit-making.

A large amount of the commissary supplies that were collected in Florida and the lower South and in the hands of Confederate commissary officials, however, rotted in storage facilities.³ At this stage of the war, rail transportation was unable to get sufficient quantities to the Confederate armies and Confederate logistic organization was deficient.⁴ The Federal expedition did put a crimp in Confederate logistic efforts for a short period. Poor Confederate supply management, failing transportation, manpower shortages, and Sherman's advance through Georgia and South Carolina overshadowed the Federal efforts in Florida to hamstring the Confederate armies logistically. Still, in 1864, a situation existed wherein the Confederate armies were unable to stockpile supplies, and any disruption of the supply pipeline was a calamity. The Federal expedition did manage to contribute to Confederate supply problems by disruption of shipping and transportation facilities and destruction of some stockpiled goods. After Olustee, the Federal raids that took place until the end of the war continued that effort.

The Federal forces occupying east Florida were handicapped because so much of the area they controlled depended upon Federal support. This situation was created by current Federal regulations which allowed only Port Royal, South Carolina, to be an open port. If a port could be opened

in Florida, the local economy could be revived (with some profit to the occupying forces) and the local residents would be less dependent upon the Federal government. This objective was not immediately achieved by the Federal expedition. However, the port of Fernandina was opened before the close of 1864.

Within the framework of modern war, the collective objectives of the 1864 Federal expedition were legitimate, valid, and attainable. The potential of that expedition was great but was recognized more by General Beauregard and Governor Milton than by the Federal leaders who planned and executed it. Capitalizing upon Federal seapower for surprise and using what was considered at that time a minimum size force, a state could have been severed from the Confederacy and a worsening Confederate supply system seriously aggravated. Blacks could be recruited to build Federal strength with a corresponding loss of manpower to the Confederacy. The Confederate transportation system could be further crippled. Federal occupation efforts and eventually attempts at reconstruction would be facilitated by the opening of a port in Florida to stimulate revival of the local economy. Any Confederate reaction to the expedition would involve further dispersion of already limited Confederate forces leading to increased vulnerability elsewhere. In the Clausewitzian concept of the zero-sum game, the potential for Federal gain and Confederate loss

contributing to final victory was great. The full potential of the expedition could have been realized had the men who planned and executed it been more capable. And, considering the comparatively small size of the forces involved, at minimum cost.

In a total war where all elements are interrelated and nothing is won or lost or decided until final victory, the criteria for evaluating the 1864 Federal expedition in to Florida is its value in relation to that final victory. I contend it had a small positive value despite the Federal losses at Olustee. It would have had a greater one without the Federal defeat at Olustee by demonstrating the efficiency and effectiveness of a highly-mobile, water-based strategy, used to attack the enemy's resources, with the least possible negative effect on the civilian environment. Instead, the massive, plodding, toe-to-toe war of annihilation that brought success would be fixed on our experience and combined operations discarded and forgotten until more contemporary wars.

Notes

¹ Shofner and Rogers, "Confederate Railroad Construction," 227.

² William Watson Davis, Civil War, p. 191.

³ ORA, IV:3, p. 15.

⁴ Goff, Confederate Supply, pp. 247-248.

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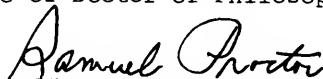
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William H. Nulty was born in New York City. He received his A.B. from Columbia College, his M.A. in American history from Hofstra University, and his M.A.T. in social sciences from Jacksonville University. He entered the U.S. Marine Corps in 1954 and served twenty-one years as an officer, seeing combat in Viet Nam as an infantry advisor to a Vietnamese Battalion. For this duty, he received two Bronze Stars and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, Silver Star.

In 1975, he retired from the Marine Corps as a Lieutenant Colonel and was employed with Union Correctional Institution as a Counselor. He left this position in 1976 and began teaching social studies at Orange Park High School (Florida), where he is currently employed, teaching both the regular American history and advanced placement American history Courses. He has also taught social science courses for Chapman College, California and St. Johns River Community College, Florida. In 1985, he qualified for the Associate Master Teacher rating in Florida's Merit Teacher Program.

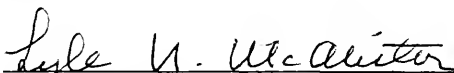
He is married and the father of three children. He has a strong interest in local and military history which prompted the choice of the 1864 Federal expedition for a doctoral dissertation.

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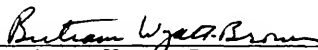
Samuel Proctor, Chairman
Distinguished Service Professor
of History

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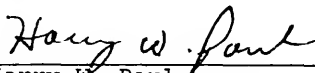
Lyle N. McAlister
Distinguished Service Professor
of History

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Bertram Wyatt-Brown
Richard Milbauer Professor
of History

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Harry W. Paul
Professor of History

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



James W. Longstreth
Associate Professor of Educational
Leadership

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of History in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

December 1985

Dean, Graduate School

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA



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